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## The Michigan Excursion for the Founding of Riverside, California

*Merlin Stonehouse*

THE USE OF THE EXCURSION as a technique in attracting money and settlers to the colonies in California was a natural development following the completion of the Union Pacific. The technique was used by colony organizers, real estate promoters, boards of trade, and eventually by California newspapers and railroad traffic departments.

Judge John Wesley North, the founder of the Riverside and Oleander colonies in California, used the excursion technique in the 1850's in Minnesota, arranging transportation up the Mississippi on river boats for peopling of present-day Minneapolis and his colonies at Faribault and Northfield. After the Civil War, he sought Northern and foreign settlement of East Tennessee and planned excursions from as far away as England.

In 1869 Judge North and Dr. James Porter Greves, one of the original proprietors of Marshall, Michigan, were in Knoxville, Tennessee, as carpetbaggers. In that year the Ku Klux Klan activity in Tennessee made them despair of founding a colony on the French Broad River and their thoughts turned to the far West where both had lived, and particularly to the little-known and sparsely settled region of Southern California. To promote this venture they planned an excursion over the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads. At the same time, Nathan Cook Meeker and Horace Greeley were laying plans in New York for the Union Colony which was soon to become Greeley, Colorado.<sup>1</sup> The California excursion was coincident with the first migration to the much-publicized colony at Greeley and only a few days prior to the first through train from the Atlantic to the Pacific carrying the Boston Board of Trade excursion to California.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>David Boyd, *A History: Greeley and the Union Colony of Colorado*, 31 (Greeley, Colorado, 1890). The first call for a meeting to form the colony was in December, 1869.

<sup>2</sup>*Detroit Daily Post*, May 26, 1870. Marshall (Michigan) *Statesman*, May 25, 1870.

A large part of the North and Greves party consisted of friends from Michigan. This excursion lacked the style of the millionaires, "the best blood of Boston," who rode in "eight of the most elegant cars ever put on rails," consisting of refrigerator car, two hotel cars, two magnificent saloons, two "elegant" commissaries, complete with a fine library, two organs, and a mobile printing office from which issued daily a handsome copy of the *Transcontinental*. These cars were hurriedly created in forty days by Pullman in several shops in Illinois and Massachusetts. At Detroit they were drawn by two engines, the "Ruby" and the "Persian", bearing a life-sized portrait of the Michigan Central president, James F. Joy, and tender paintings of Boston, Detroit, Lake Superior, and San Francisco.<sup>3</sup>

For all its style, the excursion of the "bon ton of Boston" was barren of results as compared with the Michigan excursion which selected the site of Riverside, which in ten years would become one of the most attractive and famous California cities, desert health resort, and home of the new naval orange. Greves was now to eclipse his fame as a proprietor of Marshall in becoming the acknowledged father of Riverside. The men he had led to Marshall had prospered there and were ready to invest in the Southern California Colony Association even though the site of the colony had not been selected. Many of them were men of distinction in Michigan: a former editor, politician, judge, banker, manufacturer, and real estate promoter. Most of them had known each other from boyhood in upper New York and had been associated with either North or Greves in humanitarian reforms of the time as abolitionists, prohibitionists, and founders of the Republican party.

Greves, like North, was from Onondaga County, New York. They had become intimate at the Reese River mines in Nevada in the 1860's. The office, in which Greves searched titles and advised prospectors and compiled one of the most valuable abstracts of titles of mines ever published,<sup>4</sup> was also the headquarters at Reese River for J. W. North, Lincoln's Surveyor General and later Judge of the Supreme Court of Nevada Territory.

The lives of the two men had interesting parallels. Greves had pioneered in Michigan and Wisconsin while North helped found

<sup>3</sup>Detroit Daily Post, May 25, 1870.

<sup>4</sup>An Illustrated History of Southern California, 703 (Chicago, 1890).



Minneapolis and his own colonies at Faribault and Northfield, Minnesota. Lincoln had sent Greves to administer to the sick contrabands at Beaufort, South Carolina, and North to Nevada to deal with the chaos of unsurveyed mining claims of the Comstock lode. Greves carried on this same work privately in Nevada from his office next to the assay office at Reese River. After the Civil War, North carpetbagged in Tennessee and Greves followed him to Knoxville for the purpose of settling Northerners in an East Tennessee colony modeled after the Oneida community near their old homes in New York state. When this project appeared not to be feasible in view of rising southern hostility, they began to think of the free and unsettled West.

Their plans culminated in a broadside issued from Knoxville on March 17, 1870, announcing a prospective colony somewhere in California. The circular was entitled "A Colony for California." They were uncertain as to where the colony would be, who would people it, and to what extent it would be cooperative, but they were quite clear as to essentials:

We expect to have schools, churches, lyceum, public library, reading-room, etc., at a very early date, and we invite such people to join our colony as will esteem it a privilege to build them.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, Greves and North wanted to repeat in California their colonization successes at Marshall and Northfield, Minnesota. As far as North was concerned, the plans for this elaborate colony were made entirely upon credit. He had nothing but his reputation and character. He had made a small fortune in Nevada from his Minnesota Quartz Mill at Washoe City. He had taken this fortune to East Tennessee to aid in the reconstruction of that part of the state which had been loyal to the Union. His family had done without carpets and other luxuries to contribute to the Sanitary fund, and in this spirit of self-sacrifice and sense of public duty, he had looked forward to doing good in the South. For a time he succeeded and was prominent in politics in association with William G. Brownlow, the famous "Parson" and reconstruction governor of the state,

<sup>5</sup>Copies of the broadside are in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, Numbers 258580-1. Quotation from the broadside is made in John Greenleaf North's "Riverside, The Fulfillment of a Prophecy" *The Land of Sunshine, the Magazine of California and the West*, 13: 465-80 (December, 1910).

but while attending a Fourth of July picnic, North had intervened in the lynching of a Negro, and became thereafter a man marked for the attentions of the Ku Klux Klan. His iron foundry and store were boycotted in Knoxville and his investments failed. He tried to hang on for the benefit of those friends he had brought to Tennessee from New York, Michigan, Minnesota, and Nevada. In saving the investments of his friends, he impoverished himself and went deeply into debt.

Dr. Greves had been more cautious in East Tennessee and retained his mining interests in Nevada, but the colony in Southern California would of necessity depend upon the investment of friends in Michigan and their connections in New York and Iowa. North's contribution was supplied by Charles N. Felton who was related to North by marriage and had been an official of the San Francisco mint. At this time he was listed in the San Francisco directory as a "capitalist," but he entered this shoestring project less from business expectations than from his high regard for the integrity of his old New York friends, North and Greves.

The broadside was distributed in Michigan by Dr. Greves who returned to his home in Marshall, following the defeat of the carpetbag government in Tennessee. He spent most of the winter of 1869-70 in recruiting for the Michigan excursion. When the expedition left Michigan in mid-May, 1870, no one had the slightest idea that a colony would be established in the Southern California desert on the old Spanish ranchos of Jurupa and Rubidoux. North favored a settlement at the insignificant village of Los Angeles, but he and Greves had seen enough of the possibilities of irrigation in Nevada to make them fall in line with the members of the Michigan excursion who recognized the richness of the arid land. The Mormons, who are said to have been the first Anglo-Saxons to use irrigation, had some experimental fields at Carson City, Nevada, and mining sluices in Nevada often irrigated small patches of garden tended by the miners. The Nevada gardens familiar to North and Greves were frequently touched by frost, but they felt the Southern California desert could produce year-round crops. The determination of the location of the colony at Jurupa, soon to be called Riverside with sublime press-agentry and optimism from the fact that the Santa Ana river trickled through the desert at this point, was

the outcome of the Michigan excursion. The decision was not made until the undiscouraged nucleus of the party reached Los Angeles. It was not until June 24, about a month after the party reached California, that the excursionists began the purchase of eight thousand acres for a colony site; the deal was not completed until September, 1870, and Michigan investors and settlers continued to buy town lots and farms in succeeding months. Many of them wanted to first take a look at irrigation practices at Salt Lake City and at colony life at Greeley, Colorado. Some returned home to Michigan confirmed in the opinion that this was the best of all states.

Michigan herself needed settlers in 1870. The Legislature had just established an Immigration Society to encourage Germans to come to Michigan. The policy of the *Marshall Statesman* was to deprecate all westward migration from Michigan. The paper reported that spring with obvious concern that

The immigration to Kansas this spring is unprecedented. About 1,000 per day come by different railroads, and large numbers have come overland in wagons.<sup>6</sup>

Money needed in Marshall had been invested in Kansas, and men from Calhoun County had gone to Tennessee and to the Greeley colony in Colorado. Seth Lewis, the former publisher of the *Marshall Statesman*, left the paper in the hands of his son and accompanied the excursion to California with the apparent intent of discouraging all Michigan people interested in such projects.

The first attention given to Greves' plans for a California colony by the Marshall paper was an item headlined "Ho for California."

Efforts are making, with every prospect of success, to raise a party to make an excursion to California, over the Union Pacific, in May next. Many of our best citizens have signified an intention of going. The rates for the trip depend on the size of the party—for a party of fifty or over the fare for the round trip will be \$149, a saving over regular rates of \$87.<sup>7</sup>

The willingness of the Union Pacific to encourage excursions at reduced fare for the settlement of California was conditioned by a growing fear of a population drift to Washington Territory beyond its lines<sup>8</sup> and into an area to be served by the projected Northern

<sup>6</sup>*Marshall Statesman*, April 6, 1870.

<sup>7</sup>*Marshall Statesman*, March 23, 1870.

<sup>8</sup>The interest Michigan people took in Washington Territory may be seen

Pacific—a venture then before Congress. But for all its eagerness to attract settlers to California, the railroad was not ready to give excursionists the sort of rates it would charge ten years later after such colonies as Riverside had proved their worth. The railroad even increased the fare a whole dollar beyond the first-announced rate, although twice as many joined the excursion as had been expected. A few years later, during the boom of the eighties in Southern California, an excursionist could go all the way to Riverside for one dollar.

The Michigan party was augmented by a group of friends, relatives, and former New York acquaintances under Ebenezer Griffin Brown of Belle Plain, Benton County, Iowa. He was a leading merchant, musical conductor, director of the school board, and councilman.<sup>9</sup> He was, therefore, in complete harmony with the business and cultural objectives of the colony organizers. The Belle Plain excursionists included some who had lived in Michigan. One of the Iowa founders of the Southern California Colony Association was Dr. Kelita Davis Shugart,<sup>10</sup> formerly of Cass County. He had studied medicine with Dr. E. J. Bonnie of Niles, and had then gone to Colorado. He married Martha T. Reams of Michigan before settling in Belle Plain, Iowa, in 1864. Dr. Shugart had helped plan, but had not joined, the original excursion, but when the early summer passed without any decision as to where the colony would be located, he joined the excursionists in Los Angeles in August, 1870, and backed his Michigan friends in completing the purchase over the protest of Judge North who still favored Los Angeles. On August 25, 1870, Shugart visited Riverside with Dr. Greves and the chief investors in the colony, and as treasurer cast the deciding vote for the Riverside location. On March 1, 1871, drawing upon his knowledge of Michigan orchard culture, he planted the first fruit trees in Riverside, thus determining the nature of the future major industry at a time when many of the colonists were still thinking of other agriculture.

by the regular publication of correspondence from Benjamin Dollbear (or Dolbear) writing as Bureau of Information, Steilacoom, Puget Sound. See the *Marshall Statesman* for April 27, 1870, and subsequent issues.

<sup>9</sup>*The History of Benton County, Iowa*, 443-46 (Chicago, 1878).

<sup>10</sup>*An Illustrated History of Southern California*, 497-99 (Chicago, 1890).

The Iowa contingent joined the Michigan excursion in Chicago on the tenth anniversary of the nomination in that city of the first Republican president. This was no coincidence, for they were all Republicans, some of them had helped organize the party under the oaks at Jackson, and some had been delegates to the Chicago Convention of 1860. On May 11, 1870, the *Marshall Statesman* reported:

Dr. Greves has laid before us the schedule of the excursion to the Pacific Coast. The party will leave Chicago, May 18th, at 10:40 A.M., from the Union Depot at the foot of Lake Street. It will number about one hundred, of whom thirty are from this State, and ten or twelve from this vicinity. The rates have been modified—now standing at \$150 for the round trip, without regard to numbers.<sup>11</sup>

Tickets for the excursion were good for sixty days, ample time to see Salt Lake City, Lake Bigler,<sup>12</sup> the Yosemite Valley, the Mariposa trees, and San Francisco. Such were the attractions of California in 1870. On Wednesday, May 18, the paper carried another headline "Ho for California!" (the name of a current song) announcing the departure the day previous of the Marshall party.

The California excursionists from this city took the fast express, Tuesday morning. The party consists of J[oseph] C[olton] Frink, Preston Mitchell, F[rederick] N[elson] Church, and his son Fred, Seth Lewis, William R. Schuyler, and Dr. [Sanford] Eastman and wife of Buffalo, N.Y., relatives of the last named gentleman. The party left in most excellent spirits.<sup>13</sup>

The Chicago *Tribune* reported the assembling of the party of about a hundred in that city.

The grand excursion party, of which so much has been heard lately, will leave Chicago May 18th for California, over the Chicago, Burlington and Missouri River, Union and Central Pacific Railroads. The train will be composed of the celebrated Pullman Palace Drawing Room and Sleeping Cars.<sup>14</sup>

The report concluded with the observation that experienced persons familiar with all points of interest would accompany the party. The party continued to "enjoy itself hugely" all the way to Cali-

<sup>11</sup>*Marshall Statesman*, May 11, 1870.

<sup>12</sup>The name had already been changed to Lake Tahoe, but to North and Greves it was still Lake Bigler as it had been before 1864.

<sup>13</sup>*Marshall Statesman*, May 18, 1870.

<sup>14</sup>The Chicago *Tribune*, May 17, 1870.

fornia, according to Seth Lewis, the correspondent and former publisher of the Marshall paper. Most of his observations lacked originality—and warmth for the colony venture. From Laramie he observed that “All that has been said about these mountains is fully sustained by a personal view.”<sup>15</sup> He complained about none of the usual discouragements to travelers. Dr. G. Law,<sup>16</sup> another Michigan man going over the same route, had been caught in a storm at Council Bluffs where it had cost him the exorbitant sum of fifteen dollars to wait out the storm until he could cross on the ferry to the Omaha terminus of the Union Pacific. In Omaha, where baggage had to be rechecked, he beheld a

scene of confusion and lack of true system. . . . There were probably five hundred pieces of baggage in the miserably small and comfortless depot of the Union Pacific railroad.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, he found the Union Pacific “Magnificent.”

The Michigan excursion had no such storm to annoy them and the hardships of the journey were scarcely noticed, so great was the improvement over stage travel across the plains. They raced to depot lunchrooms hoping to be served before the departure sounded in the belfry. “Meals en route are ‘six bits,’” said Seth Lewis, consciously falling into a westernism. He translated the sum for Marshall readers as “six shillings or one dollar in greenbacks.” He did not think much of the West. Rain prevented their seeing the Sierras, and the Central Pacific was as circuitous as the Notaway—a creek in Calhoun County. He added:

I don’t know what so large a country was made for. The land, with now and then a solitary exception, is worthless for farming purposes. . . .

<sup>15</sup>Marshall *Statesman*, May 25, 1870.

<sup>16</sup>Adrian, (Michigan) *Weekly Times*, May 26, 1870.

<sup>17</sup>Adrian *Weekly Times*, May 26, 1870. Dr. Law was known in Michigan and Colorado, where he became an official in Union Colony at Greeley, as “G. Law.” All official signatures are abbreviated. He enlisted in the Union army from medical school, was captured and escaped three times before he finally gave up the war and drove his sulky west to Michigan. He stopped in Blissfield for lunch and heard that the local physician, Dr. Roland B. C. Newcomb, needed an assistant. He sought out the Blissfield doctor and began a close friendship and association with Newcomb. An account of Dr. Law’s life is given in the *Greeley Tribune*, July 26, 1876; and in Boyd’s *A History: Greeley and the Union Colony of Colorado*, 421.

Dr. Gulielmus Law is mentioned in W. F. Stone, *History of Colorado*, 3:98-99 (Chicago, 1918); and in the Colorado State Medical Society, *Medical Coloradoana* . . . 1871-1921, 82 (Denver, 1922).

Since entering the Territory, the Indians have appeared in considerable numbers—bands of them being at nearly every station. So far, they have been harmless, although in some places we learn they have been troublesome.<sup>18</sup>

It is quite possible that the excursion party expected the Indians to attack the train. While they were in Chicago, the papers reported that Indians had made a raid on the Kansas Pacific Railway.<sup>19</sup> The Indians had long been a nuisance along the Union Pacific. A large party of Indians once stretched a rope across the tracks in the hope that a hundred mounted Indians on either side could stop the Iron Horse. The result was discouraging to the survivors. All that spring troubles with the Indians in the West and in Canada had been headlined in the press. The excursionists were ready for the worst. A few hours before they entered South Pass, the Indians had run off all the horses in the neighborhood and had wounded a man. The leading chiefs were then preparing to go East with demands upon Washington in general and in particular upon the Mohawk Indian, Ely S. Parker, who was Grant's Commissioner of Indian Affairs.<sup>20</sup> With such negotiations in prospect, the Indians along the excursion route were quiet but sullen. Seth Lewis reported,

They seem to be about as good looking as our Michigan Indians, and quite as attractive in point of cleanliness.

Such remarks, ungenerous in their implication, set the newspaperman apart from the company of humanitarians who were, even as he wrote, filing into another car for a Methodist meeting and a sermon which Lewis called (with obvious connection) "short and very good." These observations were printed under the heading,

#### CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE CALIFORNIA EXCURSIONISTS

Arrival in San Francisco—All's Well! Seeing the San Francisco Elephant, Pleasant Greetings of Old Friends.<sup>21</sup>

The greeting of old friends was more than pleasant to Seth Lewis, it was a lifetime habit and a career. He had been publisher long enough to know that local names make news. When he returned to

<sup>18</sup>Marshall *Statesman*, June 1, 1870.

<sup>19</sup>The Chicago *Tribune*, May 17, 1870; under the heading "The West" the caption read, "The Indian Raid on the Kansas Pacific Railway."

<sup>20</sup>The Detroit *Post*, May 31; June 2, 1870.

<sup>21</sup>Marshall *Statesman*, June 1, 1870.



Michigan, everyone with kin or cousin in the West would expect a full report, and he did his best to satisfy the expected demand. He had considerable assistance from many Michigan people who heard that the excursion was passing through and came to the railside. One woman traveled fifteen miles—a day's ride there and a day's ride home. Station masters and telegraph agents turned out to be from Michigan and held up the train while they shook hands all round and heard the news from home. The station-stop sociability was just the beginning; there were endless Michigan reunions throughout California.

At Santa Clara, called the handsomest place visited, Lewis reported such homey details as that Professor [Thomas H.] Sinex now presided over a Methodist school. The Rev. T. H. Sinex had been president of Albion College in Michigan, and was now president of the first college chartered in California,<sup>22</sup> the University of the Pacific, which was soon to move to Stockton, California. Another friend from Michigan kept a fair-sized cabinet warehouse with the usual assortments, and still another Michigan man was still in the bread and cracker line, and his crackers were "as much prized here as in Michigan."<sup>23</sup> Almost everything good and everyone important in California seemed, in Lewis' report, to have an obvious connection with Michigan.

Finally, however, Lewis was brought to the reluctant conclusion at Santa Clara that California strawberries were larger and sweeter than those of Michigan. This was something of a concession from a reporter who had viewed the Nevada desert as an instance of California drought. "As we neared San Francisco," he wrote, the crops were looking better. Cherries and garden vegetables are abundant and ripe. Grape vines seem to be flourishing. Wheat is mostly harvested, as well as grass and oats. Yet I conclude that as a whole, Michigan is ahead of any other State I have been in for crops of all description, and is a fair State to live in.<sup>24</sup>

Seth Lewis was too well acquainted with the advantages of Michigan, and saw too readily the short-comings of that drought year in

<sup>22</sup>Rockwell D. Hunt, *History of the College of the Pacific, 1851-1951*, 39 (Stockton, California, 1951).

<sup>23</sup>Marshall *Statesman*, June 8, 1870.

<sup>24</sup>Marshall *Statesman*, June 11 1870.



California, to be a good publicist for the type of desert colony settled at Riverside. Why move to the peninsula cities of San Francisco Bay when at home, if one sought a beautiful peninsula, one need only look around him? The colony proprietors were spared his description of the Southern California site, for Seth Lewis and others from Michigan were content to linger in San Francisco at the Grand Hotel, "the best in the city," and renew old acquaintances with Michigan strays. He wrote,

I suppose Mr. Schuyler and Dr. Eastman will start on Monday, for Los Angeles. I think hardly any of us will go that trip. California sight-seeing seems to disgust most of our party, owing to the enormous expensiveness.<sup>28</sup>

It is little wonder that the excursionists preferred to stay in the more civilized parts of California in 1870. The difficulty of travel was more than they could undertake in pleasure-seeking. Special rates were given by the steamship company for passage from San Francisco to San Pedro, the port of Los Angeles; but the voyage was long and often rough. There was nothing to see in the city of the Angels but a few adobe houses built for Mexicans who had come to tend the cattle on a thousand barren hills during the gold-rush demand for meat, a disreputable Nigger Alley, dusty streets of desperados and drunken Indians, ditches adapted as much to sewage as irrigation, a pueblo church in decrepitude unrelieved as yet by the romantic Ramona tradition. The rancho life of Mexican days with colorful horsemen racing through the streets had been in decline for ten years as Americans bought up the hillsides for orange groves that were still scattered scrub. The pueblo in 1870 was a vicious setting for heinous crime which, indeed, broke forth in a bloody pogrom of the Chinese the next year. There was every reason for Michigan tourists to stay away.

Yet for the undiscouraged few who journeyed southward to plant a colony, there were signs of progress. There were as many people in Los Angeles as there were whites in all of California on the eve of statehood, about eight thousand. A fine hotel, the Pico House, was ready to open in a few days, on June 19, and the adjacent Merced theater and Masonic Temple would soon lend an Anglo-Saxon respectability to the plaza. Cock fights, horse racing, and an occa-

<sup>28</sup>Marshall *Statesman*, June 8, 1870.

sional bullfight recalled better days, and on feast days the pueblo became almost handsome with decorated houses and decorative costumes.

The Los Angeles railway had only nineteen miles of track, stretching from the port at San Pedro to Los Angeles. There was no connection with the other six-hundred and ten miles of railroad in Northern and Central California, but the state expected to construct an additional one hundred and fifty miles of track that year,<sup>26</sup> and sooner or later a railroad would cross the mountain barriers into Southern California. The colony site at Riverside had no connection with Los Angeles except an unimproved wagon road improvised by the Spanish padres and captains a hundred years before.

North's son recalled that

there was no railroad within four hundred miles of San Bernardino [the county seat] except a short road leading from Los Angeles to San Pedro, and practically all the travel to San Bernardino County was by steamer from San Francisco to San Pedro, and by team from Los Angeles to San Bernardino.<sup>27</sup>

The desert, which is now the flourishing groves of Riverside County, was then a forbidding part of San Bernardino County. The only habitation near the colony site was an impoverished scattering of adobe huts which flash floods, cloudbursts, and constant desert winds had all but worn and crumbled to the desert pavement. These flat earthen houses scarcely rose above the level of the dunes and the only indication that they were habitable was the lounging Mexican group of herdsman who rolled about the doorways in laughter at the Americans who proposed to pay good money for this worthless land. Later, when the Riverside community started its fields, there was considerable friction between the Mexican herdsman and the newcomers, for they seemed to delight in stampeding their fast horses across the carefully tended seedlings. The Southern California Colony Association was not the first to amuse the herdsman.

In November, 1869, the Silk Center Association had purchased the area to grow mulberry trees and collect the state subsidy on silk-worm production, but Louis Prevost, who had achieved some fame

<sup>26</sup>San Francisco *Alta*, May 15, 1870.

<sup>27</sup>North, "Riverside, The Fulfillment of a Prophecy" in *The Land of Sunshine, the Magazine of California and the West*, 480.

in Santa Clara in silk culture and was the only member of the association who knew anything about cocoon processing, died before the silk growers could make any use of the land. The Silk Center Association was eager to turn over its holdings to the Southern California Colony Association. The new owners of the Jurupa and Rubidoux ranchos wandered across their waterless acres hopefully, arguing whether to call it Jurupa or Joppa until with rare inspiration they arrived at the name Riverside. North stood at the present site of the Mission Inn, soon to be the retreat of poets, writers, and musicians of distinction, while his Michigan companions walked through the cactus and sword-leaved agaves to climb the bare desert mountain where in a few years the first Easter sunrise service would be held. Here and there flowering yucca lillies suggested an unrealized fertility of the ground upon which they attempted to plat the new community, signaling from the mountain to the men who paced off the acres in the plain. The work was hot in the shadeless desert, as these men of rare vision marked out their future homes, lot by lot. They undoubtedly saw schools, churches, lyceum, and library, for they set aside land for these purposes; but they could scarcely behold in that wasteland the city of palm-shaded streets and gardens which, a very few years later, would inspire Carrie Jacobs Bond to write her ballad tribute, "Perfect Day" — the curfew that carols across the City of Bells at the close of every day.

While these few men of vision saw the new colony taking shape in this most unlikely part of Southern California, the rest of the Michigan excursion had eyes only for the usual attractions of San Francisco. An old Michigan acquaintance, Horace C. Ladd, receiver of the Western Union Telegraph Company, took some of his Marshall friends to Forest House to view the sea lions, to the cemeteries of Lone Mountain to see the monument to David C. Broderick. This was something of a shrine to Michigan Republicans who had looked upon Senator Broderick as a likely candidate for the presidential nomination before he was deliberately shot by a secessionist sympathizer in a duel, after Broderick's gun had discharged in the ground.

Leaving San Francisco before the expiration date of their excursion tickets, the return party made most of the side trips proposed in the original prospectus. At Salt Lake City they attended services

in both the old and new tabernacles. At the former, with a thousand present, the fifty "gentile" strangers heard a preacher described by Seth Lewis as Bishop Rahley,

not one of the big guns—calls himself a mechanic, was familiar with Joseph Smith in his day. . . . He tried to justify the plurality of wives . . . as a temporal necessity for the perpetuation of the human species. Said he had five brothers East, all unbelievers, all of whom had not as many children as he had.<sup>28</sup>

Lewis observed the women smiled when the bishop described the "rights of women" as including the right to a husband of their choice. He thought the Mormon women "forlorn and forsaken" with slow and measured step, and complained that "We have not seen ten good-looking ladies in the city."<sup>29</sup> In no essential did the Deseret colony compare well with Michigan.

At the afternoon services in the new Tabernacle, ten thousand heard Orson Hyde, "an able speaker." The organ was the largest the excursionists had ever seen, and the choir of fifty sang old style, but splendidly. From Salt Lake City the excursionists went to Cheyenne and took the stage to Denver. They stopped at the American House and admired the twenty-mile canal that brought water from the mountains to a city of seven thousand. They were impressed by the Denver buildings, "mostly brick three stories high." But of greater interest was the nearby community of Greeley. Seth Lewis wrote:

On our way here from Cheyenne, we passed the celebrated colony of Greeley; containing some 130 buildings. The town is handsomely situated. The people are engaged in digging a canal for irrigation purposes, after which they anticipate growing something for . . . the inner man. From present indications we should judge the settlers will fare hard this winter for eatables. Some of the members have left, and others are said to be preparing to leave.<sup>30</sup>

About fifty did leave the Greeley colony. In line with his contention that Michigan was the best of all places to settle, Seth Lewis told the story of a man who had brought an "acre" of wagons from Jackson, Michigan, to Greeley. None could be sold and he was now hauling them away by ox team. The implication was plain that if a colony as well-planned and as widely-touted as Greeley

<sup>28</sup>Marshall Statesman, June 15, 1870.

<sup>29</sup>Marshall Statesman, June 15, 1870.

<sup>30</sup>Marshall Statesman, June 15, 1870.

could not succeed, there was little hope for a colony in the more distant desert of California.

Still North and Greves were riding the publicity wave of all colony settlement of the time. Comments on Salt Lake City and Greeley, however unfavorable, caused discussion of colony projects and in the end stimulated investors and settlers to look carefully at the respective merits of the irrigated colonies. The Deseret colonies showed what could be done in a single generation, and Greeley, what could be accomplished in a few weeks. The Union Colony at Greeley was less than two months old, the first sod was turned on April 25, 1870.<sup>31</sup>

There was undoubted interest in all such colony ventures, despite the negative attitude of the influential *Statesman*. In Adrian, the *Weekly Times* carried letters from Dr. G. Law from Greeley which seemed to indicate that Seth Lewis was less than objective. Dr. Law wrote:

We reached Cheyenne and then went on to Greeley, where, if we had not brought our tents we should have been shelterless. There are a few board shanties erected and probably 200 members on the ground . . . many of them grumblers. I shall locate my lot today and move my tent on it. Corner lots are \$50; other lots \$25. I think I shall like Colorado, I shall stay long enough to see what Greeley amounts to, if it takes every cent and I think it will.<sup>32</sup>

Colonial experiments were in the air in this last decade before the disappearance of the frontier, when the only land available in large tracts required cooperative efforts in large-scale irrigation. The disappointments and maladjustments of Reconstruction in the South and national disillusionment caused many settlers to try communitarian experiments in which a colonial self-sufficiency would avoid the prevailing economic ills of depression. Even the Michigan people returning from California were caught up in these hopes of a better life in cooperative colonies. Greves, Schuyler, and Eastman had gone on to Riverside with North. Preston Mitchell bought three thousand acres on this excursion before leaving California.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup>First Annual Report of the Union Colony of Colorado, 10 (New York, 1871).

<sup>32</sup>The Adrian (Michigan) *Weekly Times*, May 26, 1870.

<sup>33</sup>*Michigan Biographies*, 2:106 (Lansing, 1924); *Early History of Michigan*, 465 (Lansing, 1888); *Manual for the Use of the Legislature of the State of Michigan*, 1873, compiled by James W. King, 467 (Lansing, 1873).

Frederick Nelson Church was so impressed with California that he eventually returned there in the fall of 1888 to make his home at San Diego. Unfortunately, his landlord was committed to the view that this was a region of year-round, uniform temperature and denied Church even an oil stove. The Michigan man fulfilled the dire predictions of Seth Lewis by contracting rheumatism and returning to his Michigan home to die.<sup>84</sup>

F. N. Church was a man North and Greves would have welcomed to Riverside. He started life as a carpenter, built up a thriving manufacturing establishment in Marshall producing window sash and operating a planing mill. Joseph Colton Frink was successively banker, mill owner, dry goods merchant, mayor and judge.<sup>85</sup> Preston Mitchell, who invested in three thousand acres, sold dry goods in Onondaga County, New York, and in Marshall. When he returned from the California excursion, he was prevented from personally adding his abilities to his California ventures by his election in 1870 to the Michigan legislature.<sup>86</sup>

Obviously, the excursionists had been selected from men of substance and ability. They returned from California with a better view of the settlement possibilities of the West than Seth Lewis conveyed to his readers. This was not the last of the excursions to North's colonies at Riverside, and later to Oleander near Fresno; nor were these the last Michigan folk to change the southern peninsula for Southern California. North had already made arrangements with the railroads and steamship companies to extend the special excursion rates to all colonists and prospective investors. A printed pass was issued bearing the words:

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
is a member of the Southern California Colony, and that  
is entitled to reduced fare on the Rail Road lines, and on Steamers as  
per arrangements with \_\_\_\_\_

(Signed) J. W. North

North signed the pass as president of the Southern California Colony Association. It bore the notation "To be retained by holder

<sup>84</sup>*Michigan Historical Collections*, 18:122-23 (Lansing, 1892).

<sup>85</sup>*American Biographical History of Eminent and Self-Made Men*, Michigan Volume, 38 (Cincinnati, 1878).

<sup>86</sup>*American Biographical History of Eminent and Self-Made Men*, Michigan Volume, 70-71.

to be shown at different offices." One of these passes preserved in the Huntington Library at San Marino was issued to Mrs. Emma Phelps of Marshall on October 24, 1870, which was after the first excursion had returned.<sup>37</sup>

The first excursionists lived to see Riverside thrive. Marshall, Michigan, is in a very real sense the parent city of Riverside, California. One of its original proprietors became the father of Riverside and the citizens of the two cities were linked by strong ties of blood and friendship. Those who returned to Michigan from the western adventure, returned changed men, and they subtly changed the face of Marshall. That town remains today one of the most charming museum pieces, reflecting the New York state backgrounds of its colonizers, but a closer examination shows California adobe or pounded earth buildings and Hawaiian structures, built by men who ventured West, and returned home to the best of all states to introduce exotic bits of Pacific culture in their home town.

<sup>37</sup>North Papers, 1261 and enclosure, in the Huntington Library at San Marino, California.



## The Second Michigan Cavalry under Philip H. Sheridan

David D. Anderson

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE CIVIL WAR was primarily a time of trial and training, especially for the North. Many of the great leaders during the closing stages of the war were at its beginning civilians or of low army rank, and the troops themselves were eager but untrained. During that first year, officers in need of experience were teamed with men who needed discipline and training, and out of this meeting grew the great fighting machines that brought the war to its close. Such a meeting was that between Philip Henry Sheridan of the United States army and the Second Michigan Cavalry.

Organized by Francis W. Kellogg, a member of Congress from Grand Rapids, the Second Michigan Cavalry was mustered into federal service at Grand Rapids on October 2, 1861.<sup>1</sup> At that time, Philip H. Sheridan, newly promoted from second lieutenant of the Fourth United States Infantry to captain, Thirteenth United States Infantry, was on the high seas, journeying from Yamhill, Oregon, to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, by way of the Isthmus of Panama and New York City.<sup>2</sup>

Departing for the front on November 14, 1861, the Second Michigan Cavalry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William C. Davies of Detroit, went into bivouac for further training at Benton Barracks, Missouri, early in December,<sup>3</sup> just about the time that Captain Sheridan joined the Thirteenth Infantry and was appointed to duty first in auditing army accounts and then as chief commissary of the Army of Southwest Missouri under General Sam-

<sup>1</sup>*Michigan in the War*, compiled by John Robertson, 459 (Lansing, 1880). Hereafter cited as *Michigan in the War*.

<sup>2</sup>Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 2:124-25 (New York, 1888). Hereafter cited as *Personal Memoirs*.

<sup>3</sup>*Michigan in the War*, 460. The "Descriptive Roll" which was one of the references used in compiling *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War* shows both spellings of Davis and Davies. The "Descriptive Rolls" are in the Records of the Michigan Military Establishment, RG 59-14, State Archives, Lansing.



uel R. Curtis.<sup>4</sup> Both regiment and new captain spent the rest of the short Missouri winter of 1861-62 in the vicinity of St. Louis, the regiment engaged in training,<sup>5</sup> while Captain Sheridan was actively involved in the tremendous logistical build up necessary to sustain an army in the field.<sup>6</sup>

During the regiment's stay at Benton Barracks, Captain Gordon Granger, a regular army officer, was appointed colonel in command, and under Granger the regiment went into active service in the field. Joining the Army of the Mississippi under General John Pope, it participated in the campaign around Island Number Ten,<sup>7</sup> then under bombardment by the fleet and siege by the army.<sup>8</sup> Heavy fighting ensued; the regiment, restricted to patrol activity in a battle that was fought primarily by artillery and gunboats,<sup>9</sup> nevertheless participated in skirmishes at Point Pleasant and New Madrid, Missouri. During this campaign, Colonel Granger was promoted to brigadier general and the regiment was once more without an experienced commander.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, Captain Sheridan was unhappy in his rear echelon post. In difficulty with General Curtis over irregularities in supply purchasing procedures, Sheridan was threatened with court martial; and, relieved by General Henry W. Halleck, he purchased horses for the army in Wisconsin and Chicago. While engaged in this tedious task, the battle of Shiloh was fought, and Sheridan, eager to serve in the field, returned to St. Louis without orders. Talking his way into a field assignment, he was soon at Halleck's headquarters at Pittsburg Landing.<sup>11</sup>

While Sheridan was pulling administrative strings in his efforts to secure a combat post, Governor Austin Blair of Michigan arrived at Pittsburg Landing to look after the welfare of the Michigan troops and to secure a new colonel for the Second Cavalry, which had been seriously affected by illness and by factional dis-

<sup>4</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:126-27.

<sup>5</sup>*Michigan in the War*, 460.

<sup>6</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:127-36.

<sup>7</sup>*Michigan in the War*, 460.

<sup>8</sup>J. T. Headley, *The Great Rebellion*, 1:328 (Hartford, 1865).

<sup>9</sup>Henry Walke, "The Western Flotilla," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, edited by Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, 1:441-44 (New York, 1956).

<sup>10</sup>*Michigan in the War*, 460.

<sup>11</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:136-37.

putes over the succession to Granger's position. Granger recommended that Blair appoint Sheridan.<sup>12</sup>

On May 27, 1862, Sheridan, still at Halleck's headquarters, was surprised with a visit by Captain Russell A. Alger, former governor of Michigan, and Lieutenant Frank Walbridge, both of the Second Michigan Cavalry.<sup>13</sup> They handed Sheridan the following telegram:

Military Dep't. of Michigan  
Adjutant-General's Office  
Detroit, May 25, 1862

General Orders No. 148

Captain Philip H. Sheridan, U.S. Army, is hereby appointed Colonel of the Second Regiment Michigan Cavalry, to rank from this date.

Captain Sheridan will immediately assume command of the regiment. By order of the Commander-in-Chief,

Jno. Robertson,  
Adjutant-General<sup>14</sup>

This, of course, was a state appointment, and Sheridan, as a regular officer, was unable to accept without permission of the War Department. Halleck refused to let him go without such permission, but finally Sheridan persuaded him to do so. Halleck informed Sheridan that the regiment was to take part in a raid near Corinth, Mississippi, and Sheridan was off, joining the regiment at Farmington, Mississippi, at eight o'clock the same evening. With eagles given him by Granger on his shoulders, Sheridan reported to the brigade commander, informing him that the regiment was ready for duty.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, Philip Sheridan had his first combat command of the many that were to culminate in the victorious campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, and the Second Michigan Cavalry had a commanding officer who was at his happiest and best in a vigorous engagement with the enemy. Regiment and new colonel were well suited to each other. At midnight, just four hours after Sheridan had taken command, they were in the saddle, in company with the Second Iowa Cavalry, on a raid to cut the enemy supply lines at Booneville on the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. Colonel Washington L. Elliott of the Second Iowa commanded the raid.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:140.

<sup>13</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:140.

<sup>14</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:141.

<sup>15</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:141-42.

<sup>16</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:145.

The two regiments, with light rations, depending on the countryside for "bread and meat," proceeded through Iuka, Mississippi, on back roads through the unknown territory, so far from their own lines that they were mistaken for Confederate cavalry, and at times welcomed by the inhabitants. Finally, with the Second Michigan on the left, the provisional brigade approached Booneville. Meeting some resistance, the two regiments nevertheless occupied the town. The railroad was disrupted successfully, rails destroyed, trains and baggage burned, and in spite of harassing attacks by Confederate cavalry, the operation was successful. In this engagement, Sheridan notes that Captain Archibald P. Campbell of the Second Michigan, later Sheridan's successor as colonel of the regiment, first distinguished himself.<sup>17</sup>

Learning that the Confederates were evacuating Corinth, Colonel Elliott decided to withdraw because of the possibility that a superior force from the retreating army might pounce on them. Leaving chaos behind them and with insignificant losses, the two regiments returned to their old camp at Farmington,<sup>18</sup> thus concluding what General Pope called "the first cavalry raid of the war."<sup>19</sup> Immediately, however, the brigade was thrown into pursuit of the retreating Confederates under Gen. Pierre G. T. Beauregard although they had marched one hundred eighty miles in four days. The pursuit of the withdrawing Confederates actually covered much of the same ground traversed by the regiment during the raid, and on June 4, as they passed through Booneville again, they viewed the results "with much satisfaction"; embers still were smoldering in the wreckage of the trains they had burned.<sup>20</sup>

On June 4, the regiment also had a sharp clash with portions of Beauregard's rear guard. In an effort to capture as many of the enemy as possible, Sheridan brought the regiment forward quickly as the enemy was crossing a stream. The sabre battalion charged first, followed by the rest of the regiment armed with repeating rifles, and in following the enemy across a small bridge and over the crest of a hill, the regiment was dismayed to find itself almost in the middle

<sup>17</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:145-47.

<sup>18</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:148-50.

<sup>19</sup>Quoted by Col. Thomas L. Snead, "With Price East of the Mississippi," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 2:723.

<sup>20</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:150.

of a strong enemy detachment. Sheridan ordered a withdrawal covered by Captain Campbell's battalion, and Sheridan commented that "the reconnoissance was a success in one way"; the location of the enemy had been determined.<sup>21</sup>

Shortly after this clash, Colonel Elliott, who had commanded the brigade, was promoted to brigadier-general and appointed chief of staff to General Pope. Sheridan, while retaining command of the Second Michigan, succeeded him as commander of the now formalized Second Brigade of the Cavalry Division, consisting of his regiment and the Second Iowa.<sup>22</sup> The regiment meanwhile was bivouaced in the Booneville area while it rested and regrouped after its intensive campaigning. In the enemy's country as they were, however, active scouting was continued.<sup>23</sup>

On July 1, 1862, the battle of Booneville was fought between Sheridan's brigade and a Confederate cavalry detachment estimated at from five to six thousand men under General James R. Chalmers. At 8:00 A.M., the enemy forces attacked pickets under Lieutenant Leonidas S. Scranton of the Second Michigan, who fell back until cover was found and then stood until Sheridan sent three companies under Captain Campbell which, dismounting, supported him. As the attack developed in force, Sheridan sent the Second Iowa, less three companies retained for the protection of the camp, to support Campbell.<sup>24</sup> Failing in a frontal assault, Chalmers directed his troops to flank Campbell's line and sweep them up, but Campbell withdrew to a previously selected strong point, where he was again assaulted. The attack was repulsed just as the Second Iowa under Colonel Edward Hatch arrived on the scene, and the Confederates withdrew temporarily. Sheridan took advantage of the lull to reform, placing Campbell, reinforced, on the right and the Second Iowa on the left.<sup>25</sup>

Again the enemy spread its lines in an effort to flank Sheridan's brigade on the left, and fearing that this movement might be successful, Sheridan evolved a tactic that was dangerous but promising of success. Selecting four sabre companies, two from each regiment, he placed them under Captain Alger of the Second Michigan and

<sup>21</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:151.

<sup>22</sup>*Michigan in the War*, 462.

<sup>23</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:151-56.

<sup>24</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:156-68.

<sup>25</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:159.

ordered them to take a long, circuitous route around the enemy and to strike him in the rear, charging in column in an effort to break the enemy line. At the same time the remainder of the brigade would assault the front of the line when Alger's men signalled that they were ready by cheering loudly. The attack was to start one hour after Alger's departure.<sup>26</sup>

Sharp fighting continued along the line, and when the hour passed with no signal from Alger, Sheridan, fearing the worst, ordered the general assault. The odds seemed hopeless, but at that moment a locomotive with two cars of grain for the horses arrived in Booneville from Corinth, and Sheridan had the engineer blow his whistle loudly. Sheridan's troops, convinced that reinforcements were at hand, charged bravely, and the enemy, likewise fooled, began to fall back and finally broke in disorder.<sup>27</sup>

Alger, meanwhile, had circled the enemy, captured the Confederate headquarters, and assaulted the enemy rear. Too far to be heard by Sheridan and failing to break through, nevertheless his troops contributed greatly to the enemy's demoralization. Minus a few wounded and temporarily missing, they quickly rejoined Sheridan.<sup>28</sup>

In this battle, Sheridan's forces totaled 827, with ninety detached under Alger. Although Sheridan estimated Chalmer's forces at six regiments and two battalions totaling five thousand,<sup>29</sup> Colonel Thomas M. Snead states that Chalmer's total effectives were between twelve hundred and fifteen hundred cavalry.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, this successful battle was greatly responsible for the increasing attention given Sheridan as a brave, skillful commander. General William S. Rosecrans, who had succeeded Pope as commander of the Army of the Mississippi, stated in an order that

"the coolness, determination, and fearless gallantry displayed by Colonel Sheridan and the officers and men of his command in this action deserved the thanks and admiration of the army."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Although *Michigan in the War*, 460-61 carries the report of Dr. William Brownell, assistant surgeon of the regiment, Sheridan's account in the *Memoirs*, 159-63, is more vivid and detailed.

<sup>27</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:159-63.

<sup>28</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:163-64.

<sup>29</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:163-64.

<sup>30</sup>Snead, "With Price East of the Mississippi," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 2:273.

<sup>31</sup>Snead, "With Price East of the Mississippi," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 2:723.

and he telegraphed to General Halleck in Washington that

"More cavalry massed under such an officer would be of great use to us. Sheridan ought to be made a brigadier. He would not be a stampeding general.

Halleck asked President Lincoln that Sheridan be promoted "for gallant conduct in battle."<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile Sheridan's troops were not idle. A few days later he led them on a raid to Ripley, Mississippi, where prisoners and dispatches were captured, revealing enemy plans and disposition of troops.<sup>33</sup> As a result of this, Rosecrans and others sent the following telegram to Halleck, on July 30, 1862, from the Headquarters Army of the Mississippi.

Major-General Halleck,  
Washington, D.C.

Brigadiers scarce; good ones scarce . . . The undersigned respectfully beg that you will obtain the promotion of Sheridan. He is worth his weight in gold. His Ripley expedition has brought us captured letters of immense value, as well as prisoners, showing the rebel plans and dispositions, as you will learn from District Commander.<sup>34</sup>

Following the battle of Booneville, Sheridan's forces, reinforced by a battery of four guns, two companies of infantry, and the Third Michigan Cavalry, under Colonel John K. Mizner, were ordered to Rienzi to cover the front of the army; Sheridan, however, was to retain independence of action except in the event of a general attack. Again the time was occupied in patrolling, regrouping, and training.<sup>35</sup>

As the tempo of activity increased in the area, Sheridan's forces were drawn on for almost continuous scouting duty, as well as responsibility for a portion of the line extending from Jacinto to midway between Rienzi and Booneville. The expedition to Ripley, which brought Sheridan the attention mentioned above, was part of this activity. On August 27, he sent about half his command on an expedition south toward Tupelo to determine the location of the enemy forces under General Sterling Price, and because the day was so hot, the remainder of his forces except those on picket duty

<sup>32</sup>Snead, "With Price East of the Mississippi," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 2:723.

<sup>33</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:165.

<sup>34</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:166.

<sup>35</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:167-70.

were excused from duty; as a result, most of the men were asleep or lounging about their tents. Evidently the pickets were somewhat less than alert also, for suddenly there was a burst of firing from the right flank on the Ripley Road, and the enemy overran the pickets, driving on into the camp.<sup>36</sup>

Sheridan's troops managed to form, however, and aided by the attached artillery under Captain Henry Hescock, the attack was repulsed, and four battalions were mounted to pursue the enemy. Encountering the main body, about eight hundred men under Colonel Charles J. Faulkner, Sheridan attacked, driving them from the field and taking many prisoners and a good deal of plunder.<sup>37</sup>

Just after this encounter, the battle of Rienzi, Sheridan was given the famous war horse Rienzi, which he rode throughout the remainder of the war, including the famous ride from Winchester to Cedar Creek in the Shenandoah Valley. The horse of Morgan stock and raised in St. Clair County, Michigan, was owned by Captain Campbell; it had been presented to him by residents of Port Huron, when the regiment was formed,<sup>38</sup> and Campbell, knowing that Sheridan admired the horse, gave it to him. Sheridan named him Rienzi in honor of the occasion.<sup>39</sup>

At this time the Confederate general, Braxton Bragg, began his famous and dangerous movement into Kentucky, threatening Louisville and Cincinnati while Buell's Army of the Mississippi was advancing on Chattanooga, and among other troops gathered to meet Bragg was Sheridan's brigade, including his own regiment, the Second Michigan, two Missouri regiments, the Second and Fifteenth, Hescock's Battery, and the "Pea Ridge Brigade," comprised of the Thirty-sixth and Forty-fourth Illinois. Proceeding by rail on the Mobile and Ohio from Corinth to Columbus, Kentucky, the command then took steamers for Louisville. On the way, however, Sheridan received information that the enemy had occupied Caseyville, Kentucky, and spoiling for a fight, he landed his troops. However, he was met by inhabitants who professed their loyalty by waving the Stars and Stripes, and he re-embarked his troops.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:171-75.

<sup>37</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:176-77.

<sup>38</sup>*Michigan in the War*, 471-72.

<sup>39</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:180.

<sup>40</sup>*Personal Memoirs*, 1:181-83.



At Louisville, Sheridan was informed by Major General William Nelson that he had been appointed a brigadier general, dating from the battle of Booneville on July 1, and he put his command into camp, wearing his new stripes.<sup>41</sup> Previously, on July 14, he had recommended that Archibald P. Campbell, who had been acting as lieutenant colonel of the Second Michigan, be promoted to colonel in command, and in the reorganization that followed, Campbell took over command while still awaiting the authorization from Governor Blair.<sup>42</sup>

While grouping his troops to meet Bragg's expected attack, General Buell carried out a complete reorganization of his command, and as a result, the connection between the Second Michigan Cavalry and General Sheridan was severed. Reassigned first to command a brigade of the newly-formed Eleventh Division and then to command the entire division, composed of infantry and attached artillery, Sheridan took a great stride in the direction that led eventually to his command of the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac.<sup>43</sup> The Second Michigan was assigned to the Third Cavalry Brigade under Captain Ebenezer Gay.<sup>44</sup> The entire army, designated the Army of the Ohio, was under the command of Major General Don Carlos Buell.<sup>45</sup>

During the evening of October 7, the anticipated battle opened at Perryville, Kentucky, and both Sheridan's division and the Second Michigan served with distinction, resulting in a Confederate withdrawal through Cumberland Gap into East Tennessee the next day.<sup>46</sup> The threat to Louisville and Cincinnati was over, and from this point the Second Michigan Cavalry and General Philip Sheridan went their separate ways, to serve on various battlefields together, at Chickamauga and elsewhere, but never again as a unit. Each had served the other well, however, in their brief but close relationship.

<sup>41</sup>Personal Memoirs, 1:183-84.

<sup>42</sup>Michigan in the War, 462.

<sup>43</sup>Personal Memoirs, 1:189-92.

<sup>44</sup>Don Carlos Buell, "East Tennessee and the Campaign of Perryville," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3:30.

<sup>45</sup>Buell, "East Tennessee and the Campaign of Perryville," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3:29.

<sup>46</sup>Buell, "East Tennessee and the Campaign of Perryville," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3:31-51.



## The Correspondence of John Fisher

*Edited and with an Introduction by Louis Leonard Tucker*

THE SUCCESS STORY OF JOHN FISHER, emigrant of Norfolk, England, was a common experience of nineteenth-century America. Equipped only with a small sum of money, a flaming Christian zeal, and a fierce determination to win a richer material life for himself, Fisher abandoned the home of his birth and joined the common flow. Arriving in Quebec in 1830, he set off for Palmyra, New York, where he hoped to establish himself with an uncle who had embarked upon the greater destiny a few years earlier. The uncle, however, was not to be found in Palmyra, having succumbed to the lure of the Michigan Territory. For a short time Fisher resided with friends from England, now established farmers in New York. He then took to the western road, arriving in Michigan in July, 1830. He promptly purchased a small farm and settled into the routine of an agriculturist.

The following eight letters, written by Fisher to his family in England in the period 1831-38, record his steady rise up the economic ladder.<sup>1</sup> With each passing year Fisher added to his property holdings and improved his farm. Forest land gave way to cultivated fields, oxen were replaced by horses, wells were dug and new buildings erected. In the brief time span of eight years a near-penniless immigrant had risen to a position of economic importance. From this standpoint, his letters have a special worth for the economic historian.

To the social historian, the letters are more important for the attitudes revealed than for the chronicled record of economic advance, for they offer an unrestricted view of the thought complex of an English-bred, "western" frontiersman of the Jacksonian era. Additionally, they provide insights into the disturbingly complex process of cultural modification. In baring his innermost thoughts

<sup>1</sup>A microfilmed copy of the letters by The Photographic Service of Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office, County Hall, Ipswich, has been received from Dr. Tucker and placed in the Michigan Historical Commission Archives. Editor.

to his family, Fisher, a prototypal pioneer, provides the social historian with a treasure-trove of information. His profound piety, his industriousness, and activist-pragmatic temperament, his love of the land and pride of ownership of land, his naive optimism in the future greatness of America, his linking of America with providential dispensation, his contemptuous dislike for the crushing economic restrictions and "devouring Clergy" of England, his nascent nationalism and spirit of religious tolerance—all these expressed attitudes are characteristically "frontier" in substance.

These letters are reproduced as they appear in the original in the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office, England. No attempt has been made to correct the horrid spelling, or tidy up errors in syntax, but punctuation marks have been added and sentences capitalized to make for easier reading. John Fisher did not receive a formal education. But it is necessary to remind the hasty critic that, though semiliterate, this pioneer found his books "a great treasure" and as a diversion dabbled in the writing of poetry. It would be revealing to know how many farmers of our day spend their precious moments of leisure conversing with Milton or composing poetry, how many could say with Fisher that they take pride in the "many more excelent writers which adorn my libery."

#### LETTERS FROM MICHIGAN, 1831-38

*John Fisher*

Bachelor's Hall<sup>2</sup> Tecumseh  
Feb. 12th, 1831

My Dear Mother

. . . When I wrote to you before, I was in an unsettled state. I left Palmyra for Michigan on the first of July and arrived at Mr. Pollys on the 16 July after travelling through a very fertile country. I liked the land about Mr. Pollys and bought 80 acres

<sup>2</sup>Fisher settled in the Tecumseh-Tipton area of Lenawee County. Bachelor's Hall is obviously intended to underscore his domestic status.

for 23£ in a wild state.<sup>3</sup> It is mixt soil partly Timbered and part openings and look like a gentlemans park. I admire the providence of God in providing such a country for the rescue of the distressed of all Nations. I bought 2 yoke of cattle and 1 cow and 2 calves. I found hay in great abundance on the marshes in a wild state. I plow with cattle, horses being very dear in this country. I intend sowing 3 acres of oats, planting 2 acres of maize, sowing 1 acre of spring wheat, and planting ½ an acre of potatoes. Though this may appear a slow way of farming it is a certain one as we have nothing to pay to the Parsons or poor, for the industrious poor man is not known in this country—for here labour has its due—and the rigours of taxation are unknown. But my cup was mingled with bitters for I was taken sick with billious fevers after which I had the fever and ague the whole of which lasted nearly 3 months. Though these are not . . . complaints they kept me from work untill the Winter. I have reason to thank God that he has still preserved me in the land of the living. I am situated in a country where I see but little of the noise and bustle of business and hear but little of what is going on in other parts of the world—but here I enjoy peace at home having nobody to disturb me. I live alone, do my own milking, churning, cooking, and some times washing and mending, but I do not much like it. I think I want a wife but see no chance of getting one in this country as I do not like the Yankee girls. I esteem my books a great treasure for though I live alone I can converse with a Millton [sic] . . . and many more excelent writers which adorn my libery. This settlement began last spring. Now there is near 20 familys within 3 miles all aggreing to help one another along, borrowing and lending all they have. I should very much like to see some of my friends in this country. I think my Uncle George had a great deal better come to america as he would be conferring a lasting benefit on his family. I had a letter from Mr. Brazilla Smith who is living in York state near Palmyra. He and family are doing well. He talks louder than ever about the enormous

<sup>3</sup>John Fisher purchased from Thomas Green on April 17, 1831, eighty acres described as the West ½ of the SW¼ of Section 9, T5S, R3E. Letter from Richard H. Goff, President, Lenawee County Abstract and Title Company, Adrian, March 27, 1961.

taxation of England and the devouring Clergy who for their bellies sake creep and intrude and cilme [climb] into the fold. . . . I am very glad I came to this country and should any ask if I should not like to make England my final settlement I would tell them no not if I could sway the sceptre. I have a good share of the comforts of this life and may say that

My land my cattle and my cow  
Add to my comforts here below  
And should this not a comfort be  
My lands from tythes and near from taxes free  
My lands my own notything [sic] Parson share  
Nor mean exciseman is admitted here  
The prospect of this country I love  
Its liberty and laws approve  
Its government simple every subject share  
A vote for members who the truth declare  
Free and unbiassed every subject feel  
Its liberty and laws his interest still

But this kind of cant wont do as my dumplings are enough. I must go to dinner. I must give you a little account of my travelling since I wrote to you before at Palmyra. I have travelled about 500 miles and about 1154 miles from Quebec and about 836 from New York. I travelled very cheap, the whole from Quebec not costing more than 3£ besides board. I had only 18 miles land carriage from Quebec to Michigan. Tell my friends I am much obliged to them for writing to me. They wanted to know if the gospel was preached where I lived. It is preached by Mr. Smith late from England. He is of Mr. Wesley's persuasion and though not a man of very bright talents he is a sincere Christian. I am sorry to hear such a report of George Fuller. I left him in Quebec and have heard nothing of him since only by your letters. I should be glad if you could borrow 50£ for me and give security for it. I would pay the interest and if my health is spared I have no doubt but I could pay the whole in 2 years. I have bought my land and cattle and furniture and things fit to go on with but I want to build a house and stable this summer and have no money to do it with. I shall build this summer and put off my

pays until I hear from you again. If you can get the money for me it will be a great advantage to me. If not I must sell my cattle to pay it. This will make . . . if you can get the money pay it into the bank and take a receipt to be drawn in some bank in New York. Inclose the receipt in the letter you send to me. I should very much like to come to England again to see my friends and if I dont get married and I see no . . . of that. I think I shall come to England again in the course of a year or 2. I should like to see some of my friends to tea with me at Bachelors Hall and I should very much like to meet my friends at the Book Club. Every full moon reminds of it. I think if my Brother Mr. Smith like to come to America he would do better than he can in England but I would advise none to come but such as can work. There was 2 poor Englishmen come into this settlement last spring with little or no money. Now they have got 80 acres of land, each to be paid for in 2 years. There is a great many Indians in this territory who live entirely by hunting and fishing. They are poor distressed creatures and refuse every attempt made to civilize them. As the country get settled they flee back to those immense regions in the West. . . .

I remain your affectionate son, John Fisher

Bachelors Hall

Franklin June 11, 1832

Dear Mother

. . . I have enjoyed good health since I wrote to you before and have built my house but have not quite finished it. I have drawn the timber for my barn and expect to build it in about a month. My crops look well and I think I shall have abundance. I thank you dear Mother for all I enjoy of this earths goods and oh! may God grant that I may be enabled to enjoy the blessings of an interest in the blood of his son who died on the cross to redeem sinners of whom I feel myself to be the chief. I know that I have lifted up the arms of rebellion against my great Creator. I have fought against him to whom I am indebted for every breath I draw. Dear Mother do thou pray for me that I may be enabled to lay down my arms of rebellion and cease to fight against God

my maker that I may be enabled to enlist under his banner and fight the good fight of faith laying hold of the helmet of salvation looking unto Christ the author and finisher of my faith. . . . how would all earthly considerations vanish when we reflect that we must soon stand before the bar of God to give an account of the deeds done in the body whether they be good or bad. You were very wrongly informed as to the American character respecting the sabbath. We have meetings every sunday and once in the week all of which are well attended. The laws of this Territory strongly prohibit working on the sunday and are well enforced. But if there were no laws or conscience . . . believe me the Yankees do not like work well enough to work on the sunday. I am sorry to hear that the cholera is making such ravages in my native place and likewise in France. I have the privilege of reading 3 of the best newspapers in America. We have received accounts from London down to the 26 of April and Paris to 25, all of which state that the coleria is still spreading and who knows where it will stop. It has not yet visited our highly favored land but it is much feared it will. . . . I remain your affectionate son, John Fisher

Dear Brothers

I must give you my opinion of this country and England and draw some comparison between them.<sup>4</sup> I have left England and its gloomy climes for one of brilliant sunshine and inspiring purity. I have left the country cowering with doubt and danger where the rich man trembels and the poor man frowns, where all repine at the present and dread the future. I have left this country and am in a Country where all is life and animation, where I here on every side the sound of exultation, where everyone speaks of the past with triumph, the present with delight, the future with growing confidence and anticipation. Is not this a community in which one may rejoice to live. Is not this a land in which one may be proud to be received as a citizen. Is not this a land in which one may be happy to fix his destiny and ambition. I answer for me. Am I asked how long I mean to remain here I answer

<sup>4</sup>Fisher first addressed himself to his mother and then to his brothers. Both letters represent one manuscript.

as long as I live. . . . I must give you some account of what I have been doing here. I arrived here in July 1830. I bought one farm 80 acres and went to work on it but finding it had too much timber on it and I could not chop very well I bought 80 acres more clear openings something similar to pasture. I still own both of them and have but a small mortgage on one about the amount of 22£. The first I bought is worth nearly double the money I gave for it. The last which I farm myself is worth 5 times what it cost. . . . [The sides of the manuscript are badly torn from this point on. Fisher indicates that he is unable to secure laborers because of the ease with which land can be acquired. Therefore, he must work very hard himself. He further pursues the theme of richness of opportunity in America. He urges his brothers to emigrate.] your affectionate Brother, John Fisher

Bachelors Hall Franklin  
July 18th 1833

Dear Mother

. . . dear Mother I wish you and my Brothers were in this Country for [we have heard it?] is hard times in England. Besides I know that you could own more land here than you can hire there and . . . our crops here sell nearly as high as there. Than [*sic*] there is no rent, poor rates, or taxes, and money is worth more than double here. I have borrowed money and paid thirty per cent and then made it answer my purpose. I have worked but little since I came to this country and you know I had but little money and I have got an hundred and forty acres of land a good comfortable house and barn stables forty acres fenced . . . a good state of improvement—and am in a sure and easy way of living. All I appear to want is a wife to make me comfortable which I can get as soon as I please but I don't like to give up the notion of seeing England once more and if I ever see it it must be before I get married. I should like to come to England this autumn but I cannot arrange my business as to leave the country this year but I would come if I thought I could persuade you to sell and come to this country for I think it would be the best thing you could do to come while you have money to



come with. . . . I must conclude here have been a great reformation in religion in this country during the past year—and many have flocked to Christ the . . . of their salvation I remain your affectionate Son John Fisher

July 23, 1833

Dear Brother and Sister

. . . I am glad to find you have at last concluded to come to america.<sup>5</sup> You request my advice respecting the season of the year. You should come in the spring as early as you can say by the first of april for if you come in the winter as you proposed you will have a rougher passage and you cannot get any further than Quebec or New York. Which ever port you come to the rivers and lakes are all froze up and do not open before the first of May. . . . You wish to know what your passage from Quebec to the united states would be. As near as I can tell 1£.10s is about what it cost me from Quebec to my present residence . . . but perhaps you can travel cheaper. The Americans will not impose on you any more than your own countrymen will. The most I ever was imposed upon was by an Englishman but you must look out and hire the cheapest boat and be as economical as you can. . . . Your provisions some good biscuits and good flour, some hams and dried pork, a few potatoes and appels and a bullocks tongue, shuger, tea and coffee, a bottle of port wine and a bottel of brandy and a large stone bottle of Beer, nutmegs and spice, and a heap of little things such as you usually want in sickness. The prices of commodities butter 9 per lb, chees 5 per lb, sugar 5 per lb, pork 5 per lb, Beef 2½ per lb. Plumbs and sago I am unackuainted with the price. Home brewed beer you can make. Wheat from 3s6d to 4s per bushel, oats 1s6d to 2[S] per bushel, potatoes 1S 6d to 2S—here is plenty of feathers but they sell very high. You had better bring your bed along with you. Here is plenty of Timber to make chairs and tabels and all kinds of furniture. Tabels and chairs very cheap. Dear Brother and Sister I am glad you are coming where you can have the benefit of your labours. . . . Here

<sup>5</sup>The letters of July 18 and 23, 1833, represent one manuscript. Fisher allowed five days to pass before he completed the letter, which he addressed to different members of his family.



is good schools and very cheap. Every child is liburally educated. I do not know that I have seen a yankee but had some education. Bring your clothes along with you as they are a little more durabul if not a little cheaper. Do not bring any breaches as trowsers are universally worn. Your friends in religion (as there are many methodist in this settlement) are anxious to see you and I believe you will have a joyful welcome to this fertile country. How pleasing tis to see people of every country rejoicing in the same God and Saviour. . . . I remain ybur affectionate Brother John Fisher

Franklin

Oct. 7, 1835

My Dear Mother and Brother

. . . I have made much improvement on my Farm in the past year so that I cannot leave my business without a great loss.<sup>6</sup> I have 75 acres of improvement, 35 acres of wheat, 5 acres of rye, the rest for spring crop. My crops the past year were good and are selling well. Wheat is selling for 18S per comb, oats 9S 6d per comb, and other things in the same proportion. The Above is given in English money. Reecolect no Tythes nor Taxes. I cannot say that I make much money For I lay it all out in improveing my Farm which will eventually repay me. My Farm is worth more than Four times as much as the money I brought with me from England. I cannot farm it in the english fashion, for instead of 10 horses I have 10 Bullocks to work it with. But I think the time is not far distant when I shall exchange my Bullocks for horses. Horses are not so usefull in improveing a new farm as bullocks but better after it is improved to work it with. Mr Smith lived with me; he has married a Yankee wife; he has worked for me for half a year passed. He has bought 40 acres of land and made some improvement. Will build him a house on it this fall. John Hurry works for me and has done all summer. He too has bought a Farm but I think I can persuade him to stop a year longer with me. I have hired an Englishman for a year from

<sup>6</sup>John Fisher took up land from the United States government: forty acres June 21, 1833, the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 9, T5S, R3E; and forty acres November 11, 1834, the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 8, T5S, R3E. Letter L. A. Warner, Lenawee County Register of Deeds, June 22, 1960.

Deerham in Norfolk. I pay John Hurry 138 Dollars a year (30£ Eng) and board him and pay for his washing and mending. He has had more wages before he came to me but he likes living with the English best. I find much trouble in hiring men for any length of time as they soon get to be farmers themselves. It is very likely that the next letter you receive from me will inform you I am married as I find it difficult to hire a woman to do my work in the house. I have long paid my addresses to a young lady in this vicinity (from Yorkshire in England) of a very respected family. She has been very sick lately but it is with great pleasure that I see the glow of health begin to return to her countenance. Mr. . . . has just received a letter from Brazilla Smith. He and family are doing well. They live in York State. Mr. White is coming to Michigan in the spring to settle and I think that it wont be long before Mr. B. Smith comes too as he has not bought land in York State. Land is very dear. This country is improving faster than it has done in any past year as the people are getting more able to improve their farms and build better houses and barns etc. I am going to dig a well this fall. I have had to fetch water from a creek nearly forty rods for the past year. I have had many difficultys to struggle with for five years past but I begin to surmount them now and receive the reward of my labours. My prospect is cheering as far as the good things of this life go. My improved land would let for 300 dollars per year quite sufficient to support me without work but I think of improving forty acres more next year. Land rent here for nearly 7£ per acre. Its true that crops do not sell so high here as in your country but Farmers make more money. The fact is here is no tythes, taxes, nor poor rates to take away the profits. And yet I have been very much blamed for inviting people from England to this country although I have never extended my invitation to any but those that have to live by their labour. But I now say that capitalists would double their profits by emigrating to this country for money is worth more than double the interest here than it is there, often 14 per cent. Mr. Smith's children are all well. 5 of them are living with me and one (Elizabeth) is staying a short distance from here with a respectable family. People have been

very kind in taking the children untill Mr. Smith got married. His wife is a religious woman and behaves very kind to the children. . . . Mr. Smith is digging a well and will shortly build a house for himself on his own land. John Hurry desires to be remembered to you all, but more particularly to George. I have sometimes indulged myself in writing some pieces of poetry which are circulated far in this timbered world but my business is pressing. My time nearly all employed in work so that I have little time for poetry. I take a weekly newspaper printed at new york so that I have all the political news from your country sooner than you could send it by letter. Accounts from Ireland are distressing. Many perish by starvation. From your country accounts are rather flattering but I know it too well to believe that the lower class of people fare as they do here. . . .

I remain your affectionate Son, and Brother

John Fisher

Franklin

Nov. 30, 1836

Dear Mother and Brothers

I have received your letter sometime since but have waited til Mr. Smith rec<sup>d</sup> his money from New York. He rec'd it a week since. I and wife are well and getting a comfortable living. Providence is supplying all our wants. Mr. Smith is well and so are all his family. He has another daughter. A fine fat baby. He named it Marthy Jane. He is working at shoemaking and has a hired man working on his farm. He makes nearly one pound ten a week and board besides. He is getting along well. He has bought a yoke of cattle etc. Land is rising very fast in value and Mr. Smith has 40 acres of his own. John Hurry is living with me yet. He felt very bad about his mother and sister being transported. It is not known in this part and he felt anxious to keep it a secret. I wish you would not mention it in any letter to Mr. Smith. It might probably get out if you did. John has bought eighty acres of land and has nearly money to buy eighty more. Charles Pulfor and Benj Edge came to my house this summer. Charles lived with me about two months and have since travelled west. Ben is

living within 2 miles of me. He is doing well. I suppose you have entirely given up all thoughts of coming to America. I think while you can do well there and get a good living it is hardly worth while to travell so many thousand miles as this is. But should any of my brothers think of settling for life I think they had better come to America. For my part I should never advise my mother to come to this country ('though I should very much like to see her) for there is considerable difference in the manners and customs of the country and old people cannot so easily bear the fatagye of a long sea voyage and land travel as young ones nor as easily change their homes for it always takes a year or two to get things round them comfortably after they have settled in this wild country. I now begin to reap the benefit of my work though I have ever since I have been here had a good living. Still all the money I could get I have laid out in improving my Farm. I have just had the thrashing machiens to thrash out 100 combs of wheat and 20 combs of oats and have about 25 combs wheat and 50 combs of oats more. Wheat is worth 1£ 2 S.0 per comb oats 9S. I grew 3 acres of barley to fat my hogs with, the first I have sown in this country. The crop was good. They allways fat hogs on indian corn in this country. I have got a pair of as fine grey horse as the most of your country gentlemen drive in their carriages. We feed them all the oats they like to eat. All our waggons are fixed the same as your coaches with a pole instead of shafts so that we drive horses abreast with reins. Our waggons are lighter than your carriers waggons [are] yet we carry heavy loads on them. [Y]our farmers crop their land every year till they cannot get but small crops then they say that the land is poor, but in this new country they have not had a chance to reduce the land yet. New land will bear cropping ten years with out any manure—but I have not neglected to manure mine. My crops have been good as yet I do not see that they fail any. I have two hired men and work hard myself but times go a little better with me then they did a year or two ago. I could live with out work now. Since I have been married I have lived more comfortable than I did before in my life. I should have been married before but for the desire I had to see my friends in England once more—which desire I still

have but I think I shall never see them unless they take into their heads to come to this country for I am so situated that I cannot come to England. We have preaching twice every Sunday 2 miles from my house by presbyterians, methodists, and Baptists alternately. They all unite in this country. The division wall is not so high as it is in Eng. There I hope it is pulled so low that they can reach over and give one another the right hand of fellowship but here one preacher resigns his pulpit for one of a different denomination and the same congregation will sit and hear methodist, presbyterian, and baptist. . . . P.S. My wife expects to be confined in February. . . . John and E. Fisher

Franklin

Sept. 5, 1837

Dear Mother and Brothers

. . . Building a large barn 34 feet wide 46 feet long. I built it on a side hill so that I have stables under nearly 2 thirds of it. From the foundation to the eaves it is 25 feet high. It cost me a great deal of money. It is built some thing like the old Saint Margaret's Barn on the farm where I was born. My crops were good this year but we have had a very wet harvest. I have not quite finished yet. . . . My greatest difficulty is to find men to work for they are nearly all farmers them selves. I pay 3s your money a day for plowing and harrowing and such—2 work and board. . . . I have cleared, fenced, and plowed 20 acres more this year. I have nearly 100 acres plow land improved now. It has cost me so much improveing my farm that I am short of money the most of the time. . . . I think I shall build a new house another summer if crops sell well. Times are not quite so good as they have been owing to the derangement of the currency.<sup>7</sup> Our government is trying to put down Banks and substitute a gold and silver currency. I think they cannot accomplish it. If they do there must be a fall in every kind of marketable commodity. . . . My Dear Mother I should like to see you once more but I

<sup>7</sup>In an attempt to curb inflation and land speculation, President Andrew Jackson introduced a fiscal policy (Specie Circular) which restricted the use of paper money as legal tender. As indicated, it did not prove popular with western farmers.

think it is likely I shall not see you any more on Earth but oh may we meet at the right hand of God to dwell for ever in his presence. Pray for me that the acquireing of the things of this life may not engage the whole of my attention but that I may seek first the kingdom of God. . . . I am afraid that buisness is gradually [turning my] thoughts from God and religion—But may God [see that] I may be aroused from my state of lethergy before [it is too] late that I may rejoice for ever in the [blood of Christ?] that I may meet my Father, Mother, Brothers, [and sister] at the right hand of God and dwell with them [through] the countless ages of Eternity.

We in love to you all. Your affectionate Son and Daughter,  
John and E. Fisher

Franklin  
Sept. 5, 1837

. . . I have a son 7 mo old. Named after my father and my wife's father William Francis. Built a barn 34 feet wide 46 ft long. John Hurry gone to Wisconsin. Mr. White built barn. Mr. Wheatherhead that married Lydia Smith have a large fortune left him in England. I will send this letter by him. Likewise one to Daniel. See by newspaper good King William is dead and you have a queen. Strange a girl of 18 should be called to rule. [Addressed to Mrs. Lydia Fisher, Brooke Norfolk, near Norwick, Old England.]

Tipton  
March 1838

Dear Mother and Brothers

. . . I have received one from Christopher Miners stating that the clothes you so kind to send to me and Mr. Smith were safe and that he intended coming to Michigan in the Spring and he would fetch up the barrell with him. Mr. Smith and family are all well. The children are grown very much and look healthy. They have all been to school this winter and have learned very fast. Little John did not know his letters when he commenced but now is in words of two syllables. Harriet is through the Geog-

raphy. The rest in proportion. I know you would like to see them. They look clean and nice. John is about as large as William was when they left England. I have a fine little son about a year and a month old. He walked alone when he was eleven months old. He begins to talk a little. I should like you to see him. He very much resembles our family. Mr. White and family are all well and send their respects to you. John Hurry is just returned from Wisconsin. He has bought 160 acres more land. I think Hurry will do well in this country. Charles Pulfer and Benj. Edge have travelled to the west with the intention of buying land. They get high wages. All like the country well. Our country is in a prosperous condition but there is war in Canada now. The people are rebelling against their government. They want to establish a republic government similar to the United States but I do not think they will Succeed. They do not unite. Religion divides them. The Catholics and Protestants will not fight together. The United States troops are stationed along on the lines to maintain neutrality. There is great talk about war between England and the United States but I think there is no foundation for it. I think either nation will deliberate well before they declare war. It would be a great loss to the [commerce] of both nations but I do not think there will be any war, at least I hope not.<sup>8</sup> I have had good crops this year. Corn is selling well. I have nearly a hundred acres of plow land improved so that I think I can get as good a living on my small estate as I could in England in the same quantity. I am going to build a new house in the Spring. I have been getting timber and boards ready for it this winter. I shall build it 32 feet wide and 34 feet long and I shall have five rooms below. I think it will be quite convenient. I should like after I have finished my house to have you make me a visit. It is true it is a long way but I should like very much to see you. . . . I have sown 36 acres of wheat this year. It looks well. I

<sup>8</sup>Assorted economic grievances, boundary disputes, participation by some adventurous Americans in the Canadian insurrection of 1837-38; these and related factors precipitated tense relations between the United States and Great Britain in 1837-38. President Martin Van Buren's prompt action of prosecuting Americans engaged in incendiary activities in Canada, and his issuance of proclamations of neutrality contributed to the temporary relaxation of tensions.



think I shall have a good crop. This is truly a land of plenty. Here is no want of the common necessities of life but this is not a country abounding with luxuries like England. At present we have but few orchards large enough to bear much fruit. I think that this is a better climate for fruit than England—but we have plenty of Beef and pork and good wheat and good gardens. We have regular preaching once on a Sunday within a mile and prayer meetings on Thursday evenings amongst the Methodists. We generally attend with the Methodists. They are very zealous in the cause of religion and seem to live in the enjoyment of religion. Mr. Smith is considerable of a speaker at their evening meetings. I rather expect Brazile Smith will come to Michigan to settle in the Spring. . . . I live very comfortable much more so than I did before I was married. My wife's sister came nearly (?) miles last fall to make us a visit with the intention of returning in the Spring. She is a very clever gal. In this country people frequently [travel] from 500 to 1000 miles to make their [?] a visit, stay two or three months, and return again and think less of it than you would of going to London. 'Tis surprising to think of the extent of this country. People are constantly travelling west to settle. I suppose I had got to the far west when I came here but now they talk of cities rising up 1000 west of me and I suppose there is settlements more than 2,000 miles west in the United States. I believe this country was destined by providence as a refuge for the poor of all nations. . . .

I remain your affectionate son and Brother, John Fisher  
PS. You write that you hope we shall free the slaves in the United States. You could not wish it more sincerely than I, and a majority of the population of the northern [sic] states are in favor of abolition of slavery but the southern states are powerful in the councils of the nation. [On envelope] My wife and sister join with me in sending our respects to you all. Farewell. J & E. Fisher

Tipton  
May 29, 1838

My Dear Brothers

I received your letter some time about a year ago & I must confess that I am ashamed it has laid so long unanswered but I

think I can tell you something that will pay you for all this waiting. The Lord in his infinite goodness has [?] brand from the everlasting burning & thanks be to his holy name I am enabled to rejoice in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I was first induced to think seriously of my future state some time in April. Brother Robart Smith & a young Methodist preacher commenced holding prayer meetings close by my house once a week. I attended these meetings with my wife & as I came home from one meeting I said I would go to no more of them but when the time came for the next I had a desire to go. I attended them all after & saw that they appeared to be greatly concerned for the salvation of souls. I then began to examine my own heart and found that I sinned gainst God all my life long & that I deserved to be sent to hell. This brought me deep and [?]. About this time at an evening prayer meeting they said that if there were any present that they had sinned against God & desired the prayers of the congregation they might make it known by rising. I with six more rose and expressed our desire for an interest in this supplication. This was a bold & decisive step with me. I found my convictions deepning to an alarming extent so that I could not rest. I then began to seek God in reality but I had many temptations to grapple with from the enemy and from my own heart. I found great consolation from the promises of God & resolved that with the assistance of God I would seek till I did if I did not find before that religion which would stand the test of a dying hour & a judgment day. I soon began to have a hope that God for Christ's sake would pardon my sins & in less than a week I was enabled to rejoice in a sin pardoning God. My load of guilt was gon & I was enabled to rejoice in my God Saviour. My Dear Brothers praise the Lord for he has taken my feet out of the [muddy?] clay & placed them on the rock Christ Jesus. He has put a new song in my mouth. Ever praise to the Lord. And this is not all. He has been visiting my neighbours & friends & we have witnessed that the [?] of the Lord is not shortened that he cannot save. Neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear. Dark as the prospect has been the day [?] & we seek the morning of better days. For three weeks after the revival commenced the people did very little

besides attend prayer meetings going from house to house. Some made deep convictions enquiring the way to Zion, others telling what the lord has done for their souls. We have had [many] meetings not far from us almost every day in the week. In the evening we seldom close them till near midnight then some times with such rejoicing as I never saw or felt before. When we go visiting we generally close our visits by holding a social prayer meeting for nearly all our neighbours in this revival are made I trust subjects of saving grace. We have two excelent preachers living amongst us. They preach every Sabath & tis surprising to see the congregations that get together to hear them in this country. Our meeting house will not hold all who attend but we talk of holding the meeting in my barn this summer. We still continue to hear the voice of some enquiring the way to Zion. The work is spreading from heart to heart from house to house & I pray God it may spread from town to town & from city to city till all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest. We have seen the drunkard, the deist, & the old hardened sinners turn to the Lord & find forgiveness. . . .

I remain your affectionate Brother, John Fisher

## The Reves Farm — Private Claim 49

*Haviland F. Reves*

THE LAND RECORDS OF A FEW ACRES MAY BE LIKE A PALIMPSEST in miniature, showing dimly the history of an entire region. Events and personalities of the past may be remotely or directly connected with a specific piece of land, which has remained relatively little changed as great changes have taken place around it. Such a tract is the old ribbonlike French farm on the River Rouge south west of the original Detroit settlement, which became Private Claim 49, known since 1836 as the Reves Farm. This farm was in Springwells Township, created through proclamation by Governor Lewis Cass on January 5, 1818.<sup>1</sup> It is now located in Melvindale and Allen Park, Wayne County. Successive peoples — Indian, French, English, German, and American — have lived here. Many persons prominent in the history of the region have in some way entered into the history of the tract. Foreign invasion swept over the land. Probably no great events occurred upon it, but it has been connected in some intimate way with many unimportant little byroads of history. It was, for instance, in a small way associated with the early days of Michigan's first churches of both the Catholic and the Protestant faiths.

Private Claim 49 was one of a series of ribbon farms settled by the French on the River Rouge, running roughly at right angles to the general course of the river. These farms were of varying narrow widths and about three to four miles long. In this vicinity they ran parallel to the present Dix Road.

It is important to realize that this was not a remote farm or suburb. The Detroit community, in the French tradition, was an extended agricultural community during most of its first century and a quarter. It comprised not just the compact little settlement around the fort in the present downtown area where Ste Anne's Church was located, but also the closely-spaced homes which extended in both directions along both banks of the Detroit River and up the River Rouge.

<sup>1</sup>*The Territorial Papers of the United States*, edited by Clarence E. Carter, 10:768 (Washington, D.C., 1942).

Travelers of the era noted that the settlement had the appearance of a continuous village some twenty miles in length.

The River Rouge, forming one boundary of the farms in this area, has played a varied role as a path of commerce and as a scene of marine history. Indians from all parts of Michigan Territory used it as a main route of travel to the British at Malden (now Amherstburg) as late as 1819 instead of the Detroit River in order to avoid the American garrison at Detroit.<sup>2</sup> In 1827, a large group of Michigan inhabitants petitioned Congress to establish the River Rouge as a feeder for a projected canal from Detroit to Lake Michigan.<sup>3</sup> A mile downstream from Private Claim 49, an active shipyard was established in 1797, being disposed of by the United States government in 1827.<sup>4</sup> In the early 1920's, there was talk of plans to make the River Rouge navigable for the six-hundred-foot ships of the Great Lakes as far as Dearborn, but the effective head of navigation was established at the Rouge plant of the Ford Motor Company.

During the War of 1812, British and Indian invasion and occupation forces ravaged the entire area; and at that time practically all the settlers abandoned their property and retreated into the fortified settlements around Detroit. They petitioned Congress for redress on December 30, 1816, setting the period of occupation as from the surrender of Detroit by General William Hull, August 16, 1812, until September 28, 1813.<sup>5</sup>

The earliest known American description in detail of this River Rouge country is contained in a report of Charles Jouett, the Indian agent at Detroit, to Congress, dated June 25, 1803.

River Rouge, so called from its reddish appearance, . . . is navigable 6 & 8 miles for boats, & 3 for vessels of 150 tons. . . . Narrow, winding, & almost stagnant. . . . It has at all times the appearance and complexion of a pool; and its exhalations, in the summer months, are extremely unhealthful. . . . It is only on the south side . . . that the lands are fertile. . . . On the north side, it is poor, gray, sandy, and unproductive. . . . The settlements extend 8 miles on both sides of

<sup>2</sup>*The Territorial Papers of the United States*, 10:818.

<sup>3</sup>*The Territorial Papers of the United States*, edited by Clarence E. Carter, 11:1113-33 (Washington, D.C., 1943).

<sup>4</sup>F. Clever Bald, "The United States Shipyard on the River Rouge," in *Inland Seas*, 3:3-7, 71-76 (January, April, 1947).

<sup>5</sup>*The Territorial Papers of the United States*, 10:680-82, 793-95.

the river. . . . Few or none of them exceed 400 acres, and generally fall short of that quantity.\*

In his report, Jouett suggests some of the problems of land titles which were to occur in connection with the French land claims of the area when he informed Congress that the French land holders "can have no legal title." Jouett went on to say that

No disputes, and few misunderstandings have taken place with respect to the boundaries; as those lines extend collaterally from the river, forming each tract into a regular parallelogram. The total amount of these are 43, 5 of which were entered on without authority in the year 1798. The claims to all the others arise from a transference of the native right in the year 1780, at which time they were generally settled. The majority of the people are Canadian French, and better informed than those on the River Ecorse.<sup>7</sup>

Actual surveys for the United States government showed more complicated situations in the River Rouge area than were anticipated in Jouett's report of 1803. Surveyor Aaron Greeley reported on July 23, 1808, that he had temporarily quit surveying because of "extreme hot weather and flies." Further, he reported, the surveys on both the River Rouge and the Ecorse River were "the most difficult and expensive to survey of any in the Territory." Earlier he reported that the difficulties arose largely from the early establishment of the private claims around Detroit as one hundred arpents in depth, running at right angles to the rivers, which "are generally crooked [*sic*]," resulting in much confusion, as lines overran each other.<sup>8</sup>

The first land entry on record for Private Claim 49 appears to be a warranty deed in French from Jacques Lasselle to Joseph Poupard for the west half of the tract. This deed is dated September 10, 1787. It was recorded October 20, 1802.<sup>9</sup> Private Claim 49 was divided into two equal strips for some decades. The claim numbers have been changed on some old maps, and it is probable that changes in numbering, or perhaps more likely the errors of cartographers or others, have led to some of the title problems of later years. Various

\*Charles Jouett to Henry Dearborn, July 25, 1803, in *American State Papers: Public Lands*, 1:190-93 (Washington, D.C., 1832).

<sup>7</sup>Jouett to Henry Dearborn, July 25, 1803, in *American State Papers: Public Lands*, 1:191.

<sup>8</sup>*The Territorial Papers of the United States*, 10:156, 231-32.

<sup>9</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 2:30 in the old Wayne County Courthouse.

erroneous conclusions have been drawn at times by those concerned officially with this property.

Jacques Lasselle was the third of that name in his line. He also is called James or Jacques Lacelle. He was born May 1, 1735, at Montreal. He married Teresa Berthelet *dit* Savoyard on February 18, 1765, settled in Detroit about 1775, and was trading with the Miami Indians near Maumee Bay in that year. He was of a family closely allied with the Indians, and probably took over the site of Private Claim 49 from the aborigines, though known records do not show the details. Milo M. Quaife states that Lasselle located at Miamitown—modern Fort Wayne, Indiana—prior to 1776, and that his son, Hyacinthe, was born there, but that "the family hastily fled the place in advance of LaBalme's expedition of 1780, taking refuge, apparently, at Detroit, where Jacques was buried, August 14, 1791."<sup>10</sup> He may, of course, have lived meanwhile on this farm property.

A son, Jacques Lasselle IV, who was born in 1778, was married at Detroit, March 29, 1801, to Mary, daughter of the great Shawnee chief Blue Jacket. She was buried June 17, 1806, at Detroit, and Jacques on December 18, 1815, at St. Antoine, River Raisin. It is believed that he may have been the Jacques Lasselle who advised General James Winchester at Frenchtown in 1813 that the British could not be crossing the Detroit River from Malden and was consequently in part responsible for Winchester's failure to take adequate military precautions on the eve of the battle of the River Raisin.<sup>11</sup>

It is noteworthy in connection with this property that the stockade at Frenchtown had been earlier erected and then abandoned under attack by the same Colonel Matthew Elliott who functioned as an executor of the estate of Matthew Donovan, which included this farm, as noted later.

Jacques Lasselle IV appeared prominently in Detroit history, when, on a return trip from Montreal, he was shot and seriously wounded at Fort Erie, now in Ontario, at the head of the Niagara River, by

<sup>10</sup>*The John Askin Papers*, edited by Milo M. Quaife, 1:197 note (Detroit, 1928).

<sup>11</sup>See George B. Catlin, *The Story of Detroit*, 155-59 (Detroit, 1923), for a brief popular account; *History of Monroe County Michigan*, edited by Talcott E. Wing, 57 (New York, 1890). Catlin spells this name La Salle.



John R. Williams. The latter, who was a nephew of Detroit's leading citizen, Joseph Campau, and was himself to become the first mayor of Detroit, spent some months in jail at Fort Erie before he was released. Lasselle sued for \$3,000 damages through Solomon Sibley (who again enters the record later) as attorney, but lost his case.<sup>12</sup>

Joseph Poupard *dit* Lafleur, who acquired the west half of the claim from Jacques Lasselle III in 1787, was the son of Jean Poupard and Marguerite Poudret. He was born at Montreal, May 5, 1725, and was married at Detroit, February 14, 1751, to Agathe Reaume. The latter, born at Montreal, September 16, 1730, was the daughter of Hyacinthe Reaume and Agathe Lacelle (Lasselle). This Agathe Lacelle was an aunt of Jacques Lacelle (Lasselle) III, so that Joseph Poupard, to whom Lasselle conveyed the property, was his cousin. Joseph Poupard was buried at Detroit, September 20, 1792. He had three children, but only one, Angelique, survived to maturity. She married Jean Baptiste Cicot, June 18, 1770, and died July 3, 1812.<sup>13</sup>

Jean Baptiste Cicot and Angelique Poupard had a son, Francis of Assisi Cicotte (Cicot), who on August 7, 1809, married Felicity Peltier, then the widow of Lieutenant Peter Tallman of the United States Army.<sup>14</sup> She was a connection of John Askin's family, and, interestingly, is mentioned in connection with a lawsuit between Jacques Peltier and Jacques Lacelle (Lasselle) in 1809.<sup>15</sup>

Agathe Reaume (Poupard), widow of Joseph Poupard, gave a warranty deed to Benjamin Johns for the west half of Private Claim 49, which was dated May 21, 1798,<sup>16</sup> and recorded October 20, 1802. She was buried at Detroit, March 13, 1799.

<sup>12</sup>*John Askin Papers*, 1:197, 367; Christian Denissen, *Detroit Genealogies*, under "Lacelle," typescript manuscript in the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library; F. Clever Bald, *Detroit's First American Decade*, 202 and following (Ann Arbor, 1948).

<sup>13</sup>Wayne County Probate File 1-1/2, in the Wayne County Courthouse; a biographical index file to the Probate Court records is in the Burton Historical Collection; Denissen, *Detroit Genealogies*, under the names cited. The spelling of personal names in this article conforms as far as possible to the varying usage of the principal authorities immediately cited in the different sections of the article.

<sup>14</sup>See F. Clever Bald, *Detroit's First American Decade*, 118, for an account of Lieutenant Tallman's services.

<sup>15</sup>*John Askin Papers*, 2:636.

<sup>16</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 2:30.

A land contract between John Shaw and Joseph Rigby, dated July 27, 1799, and recorded July 29, 1799,<sup>17</sup> covered the transfer of the east half of Private Claim 49 for the sum of \$750. This property was described as three acres front and back. It was indicated that there then was a brickyard on the property, which was reserved to Shaw for the period of eighteen months. The property was being farmed at this time, as Shaw also reserved the use of the barn for the storage of crops "until he finds it convenient to thrash it," as well as "one room at the east end of the dwelling house." This may have been the brickyard on the River Rouge in which John Askin had an interest in 1799.<sup>18</sup>

Bricks for the rebuilding of Ste Anne's Church in Detroit in 1801-1802 came from this brickyard, as is evidenced by Shaw's subscription of two thousand bricks delivered at Detroit, and valued at £ 6, on the list witnessed by Father Gabriel Richard, dated September 21, 1801.<sup>19</sup>

Joseph Rigby executed a quit claim deed for the east half of Private Claim 49 to Robert Shaw, dated and recorded February 3 (?), 1802,<sup>20</sup> which removed Rigby's interest in this half. Previously, Rigby had executed a mortgage to Shaw in 1801, for \$292.50<sup>21</sup> the price for which Shaw sold to Matthew Donovan.

Ultimately Matthew Donovan acquired both halves of Private Claim 49; the west half from Benjamin Johns on October 19, 1802,<sup>22</sup> for \$250; and the east half from John Shaw on February 1, 1802, for \$292.50. The deed from Shaw to Donovan was recorded February 3,<sup>23</sup>

Matthew Donovan was one of Detroit's first schoolmasters, a formidable Latin scholar who had taught in Detroit from about 1794 until at least 1804. He removed to Amherstburg, Upper Canada, after the British evacuation of Detroit — apparently several years afterward — and was a resident of Amherstburg at the time of his death in 1809. His will named as his executors Robert Innis, a

<sup>17</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 1:374.

<sup>18</sup>Bald, *Detroit's First American Decade*, 152.

<sup>19</sup>Bald, *Detroit's First American Decade*, 186.

<sup>20</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 2:12.

<sup>21</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 1:459.

<sup>22</sup>Recorded the following day, Wayne County Deeds, liber 2:31.

<sup>23</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 2:12.

merchant who was his son-in-law; Matthew Elliott, the Indian agent at Fort Malden, who was virtually the founder of the town of Amherstburg; and his widow, Mary Donovan.<sup>24</sup>

Donovan posthumously secured a patent from the United States, dated April 20, 1811,<sup>25</sup> and recorded May 22, 1816, for the entire Private Claim 49, a total of 389.8 acres. This was a claim

comprehending two tracts joined together, and making but one farm, or tract, . . .<sup>26</sup> containing six arpents in front on river Rouge, and extending in depth to the lands of the St. Cosme family, bounded below by the lands of Jesse Burbank, and above by the lands of John Cissne, not to exceed four hundred and eighty arpents in the whole. . . .

François Chovin (Chauvin) . . . deposed . . . , that the above farm was in the possession and occupancy of Jacques Lasselle and John Shaw, previous to 1st of July, 1796. . . .<sup>27</sup>

till they sold to Donovan.<sup>28</sup>

This is the first appearance in this record of the boundary which appears in many land records as "the line of the heirs of St. Cosme," which formed the lower limit of the farms extending southward from the River Rouge. The St. Cosme farm was the first deep ribbon farm below the River Rouge to extend far inland from the Detroit River, like the better known French farms along the Detroit River above the Rouge. This location was well known in the community for some generations as the line of St. Cosme Road—generally pronounced by non-French residents like "San-comb" with the accent on the first syllable—which became for a time Ecorse Road and today is Southfield Road.

Matthew Donovan died July 18, 1809. His will, which is also dated July 18, 1809, was recorded in Detroit, May 7, 1816,<sup>29</sup> but was

<sup>24</sup>Information supplied by David P. Botsford, curator of the Fort Malden Museum at Amherstburg. For further information about Innis, Donovan, and Elliott, see *John Askin Papers*, 1:257-58 note, 1:464-65 note, and 2:155-56 note.

<sup>25</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 3:103.

<sup>26</sup>This tract was "entered in full length with the former Commissioner of the Land Office at Detroit in Vol. 1st, p. 441, under the date of 23 Dec., 1805." See *American State Papers: Public Lands*, 1:315.

<sup>27</sup>The date of the British evacuation of the territory, marking the real termination of the American Revolutionary War.

<sup>28</sup>Transcript of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of the Land Board at Detroit, from the 1st of August to the 31st of October, 1807, in *American State Papers: Public Lands*, 1:315.

<sup>29</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 3:93.

proved at Sandwich, Ontario, in 1889.<sup>30</sup> On May 14, 1816, his son-in-law, Robert Innis, as the sole surviving executor, sold the property constituting Private Claim 49 to Sarah Macomb on an executor's deed for \$1,000. Witnesses to this deed were Solomon Sibley, already mentioned, and William Smith, with Sibley appearing to swear to the authenticity of the document before George McDougall, justice of the peace. The deed was recorded May 14.<sup>31</sup>

Sarah Macomb<sup>32</sup> was the widow of a Major Macomb who served in the militia during the War of 1812, and who apparently died before she bought this farm in 1816. Care must be taken to distinguish her from Sarah Dring Macomb, the widow of William Macomb, brother of Alexander Macomb, who moved back to New York after her husband's death in 1796.<sup>33</sup>

The first Protestant church in Michigan (except for the short-lived Moravian church on the Clinton River, then called the Huron, near present Mount Clemens) was founded in the autumn of 1810 in the River Rouge settlement by Sarah Macomb and three neighboring couples: Robert and Betsey Abbott, William and Maria C. Mc-

<sup>30</sup>According to the Wayne County Tract Records in the City-County Building.

<sup>31</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 3:104.

<sup>32</sup>Spelled McComb, probably in error, in Catlin *The Story of Detroit*, 219, and some other sources.

<sup>33</sup>Bald, *Detroit's First American Decade*, 31. Details about the Sarah Macomb who purchased Private Claim 49 are scanty, as Elijah H. Pilcher stated years ago in *Protestantism in Michigan*, 50 (Detroit, 1878). It may be incorrect to infer from the failure of Major Macomb's name to appear on the records of the farm that he had died by 1816. There was a John Macomb or McCombs, resident of River Rouge, who signed a petition to Congress for redress of damages suffered in the war on December 30, 1816. (*Territorial Papers of the United States*, 10:682.) On April 22, 1816, John McComb was named supervisor of highways for the district "from Spring Wells to the Yellow Hill on the River Rouge, and thence to the point on said River, and including all the settlements thereon above the said point." (*Territorial Papers of the United States*, 10:721.) According to stories in the *Detroit Gazette*, May 28, June 4 and 11, 1819, John McComb, who lived on the River Rouge, killed the Potawatomi Chief Tonguish and his son on May 27, 1819. The son on the previous day had killed Thomas Sargeant, a neighbor of McComb. McComb led a posse in pursuit of the Indians. In the newspaper stories McComb is not given any military title. There is a somewhat garbled account of the affair by Melvin D. Osband, "The Story of Tonguish" in the *Michigan Historical Collections*, 8:161-64 (Lansing, 1886). It is not known whether this John MacComb, though resident in the vicinity, was in any way connected with Sarah Macomb, nor at what date she became a widow.

Carty, and William and Betsy Stacy.<sup>34</sup> Meetings were held at first in the homes of the few members along the River Rouge. Reflecting the slow growth of formal religious affiliations among the English and American settlers, in a period when Father Gabriel Richard, pastor of Ste Anne's, regularly conducted services for the Protestant residents of Detroit, it is claimed that as late as 1815, the seven persons named were the only Protestant Christians in Michigan.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, the parish record of the Rev. John Monteith, Detroit's first Protestant pastor, then directing an inter- or non-denominational type of church meeting, has the entry, under date of November 21, 1817, "Mrs. Sarah Macomb, regular in the Ep. Church."<sup>36</sup>

A log church was erected about 1818 on the north bank of Private Claim 52, then known as the Sargent Farm. This log church was abandoned in 1828, when there were many changes in the neighborhood.<sup>37</sup>

Mrs. Sarah Macomb married, at an unascertained date, Godfroy Corbus,<sup>38</sup> whose name appears in connection with Private Claim 49 on a map by Bela Hubbard.<sup>39</sup> She moved to the eastern part of

<sup>34</sup>Pilcher, *Protestantism in Michigan*, 40-51.

<sup>35</sup>Pilcher, *Protestantism in Michigan*, 15-16, 57; Frank B. Woodford and Albert Hyma, *Gabriel Richard Frontier Ambassador*, 64-65 (Detroit, 1958).

<sup>36</sup>*Detroit Society for Genealogical Research Magazine*, 14:123 (June, 1951).

<sup>37</sup>The deed for a square acre of land for the church site is dated November 21, 1817, and recorded April 24, 1821. (Wayne County Deeds, liber 6:89.) The site was surveyed by the direction of Henry Ford, and marked with oak pegs. It was identified as being on the east side of the present Greenfield Road, immediately north of the Detroit, Toledo, and Ironton Railroad tracks - a short distance from the home on Private Claim 49. This location, incidentally, does not appear to coincide precisely with some data indicated and depicted by Pilcher, but that author himself pointed out a probable inaccuracy in the work of his illustrative artist, as checked by his own recollection. Pilcher recounts that in 1851 the leading Methodist ministers of Detroit took the remaining timbers of this first Protestant church, and had them made into some thirty canes. It is an interesting speculation where these relics may be today after so many years. (Pilcher, *Protestantism in Michigan*, 85.) Some of the foregoing information was secured through the courtesy of Abraham Feldman, former curator of the Dearborn Historical Museum.

<sup>38</sup>Clarence M. Burton, *City of Detroit, Michigan*, 2:1245 (Detroit, 1922).

<sup>39</sup>Bela Hubbard, *Michigan Maps, 1818-1841*, volume 4, page 7, "Wayne and Washtenaw Counties." in the Burton Historical Collection. Most of these maps are dated 1818. Internal evidence indicates that they were corrected up to about 1841. A number of inaccuracies may be found by a careful search of the map cited.

Branch County, apparently after she sold the farm, and became a pioneer settler of the village of Girard.<sup>40</sup>

Private Claim 49 became the Wilhelm Farm when Sarah Macomb — using the name in the documents, although she was almost certainly the wife of Corbus by that time — sold the property to Peter Wilhelm for \$475, by a deed dated September 25, 1829, and recorded the following day.<sup>41</sup> Witnesses of this 1829 deed were well-known Detroiters: Charles C. Trowbridge, Elon Farnsworth, and Edmund A. Brush. Trowbridge, who was to become mayor of Detroit five years later, also signed as notary public, acknowledging the identity of Sarah Macomb.

Peter Wilhelm was drowned in the River Rouge near the farm not long after coming to this country from Germany with his father, Nicholas; wife, Salome; two children, Peter, Jr., and Elizabeth; and probably other relatives. The family history has been recounted elsewhere,<sup>42</sup> and will be summarized here only to the extent necessary to record the history of this property. Peter Wilhelm's tombstone in the farm cemetery states that he died in 1827, but there is nothing in the deed as recorded to indicate that he was dead at that time. The document is made out to him, his heirs and assigns in the usual form. If Peter Wilhelm was drowned some two years earlier, as is indicated by the mortuary inscription and family tradition, the completion of this document may have been the execution of a public trust to secure the rights of his heirs. Probate Court files of the period throw some light upon this question, but they are obviously incomplete.

The description of the property is given in this deed by metes and bounds, but it is somewhat inaccurate as the lines do not properly close. This fact was discovered by the writer in tracing the history of the site in 1928, and has been confirmed through graphic projec-

<sup>40</sup>*Michigan Historical Collections*, 6:238 (Lansing, 1884); Pilcher, *Protestantism in Michigan*, 50 and following and 83 and following; Silas Farmer, *History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan*, 1:555 (Detroit, 1890). For an interesting account of conditions along the River Rouge during the period, 1797-1827, see Bald, "The United States Shipyard Along the River Rouge," in *Inland Seas*, 3:3-7 and 71-76.

<sup>41</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 9:243.

<sup>42</sup>Haviland F. Reves, *The Reves Family*, especially Appendix D, "Wilhelm Family" (Detroit, 1951).

tion by Charles D. Davis, an engineer with The Detroit Edison Company. This is only one of numerous problems connected with the title to this land.

A well-spread tradition that the original farm was considerably larger than Private Claim 49 when Peter Wilhelm died has been encountered in several quarters. One legend says it was 1,500 acres. This legend has it that this other property was lost to Rudolph Graden, who married Peter Wilhelm's widow, Salome. A diligent search of all conceivable records bearing upon this point shows the existence of nothing whatsoever to substantiate it; nor do any documents give any substance to the companion legend, encountered in down-river circles from time to time, of buried treasure. In the 1920's there was considerable mysterious digging in the area, but no report of the finding of any treasure ever came to light.

The general belief associated with the tradition of the lost land title appears to have been that Private Claim 51, which adjoins this property on the east, was the land involved. Private Claim 51 was surveyed December 6, 1809, by Aaron Greeley, and ownership of 184.94 acres confirmed to Jesse Burbank.<sup>43</sup> Randolph [Rudolph] Graden received a quit claim deed from William and Angelique Burbank (presumably the heirs of Jesse Burbank) for all of Private Claim 51 for the sum of \$1,100, on April 30, 1835.<sup>44</sup> This property, which extended from the Wilhelm or Reves Farm to the intersection of Greenfield Road, known then as South Dearborn Road and earlier as South River Road, with Schaefer Road, then known as Raupp Road, was clearly and legally sold to Graden.<sup>45</sup> If there were any fraud here in the history of this land, it appears to be beyond discovery now, and certainly beyond remedy.

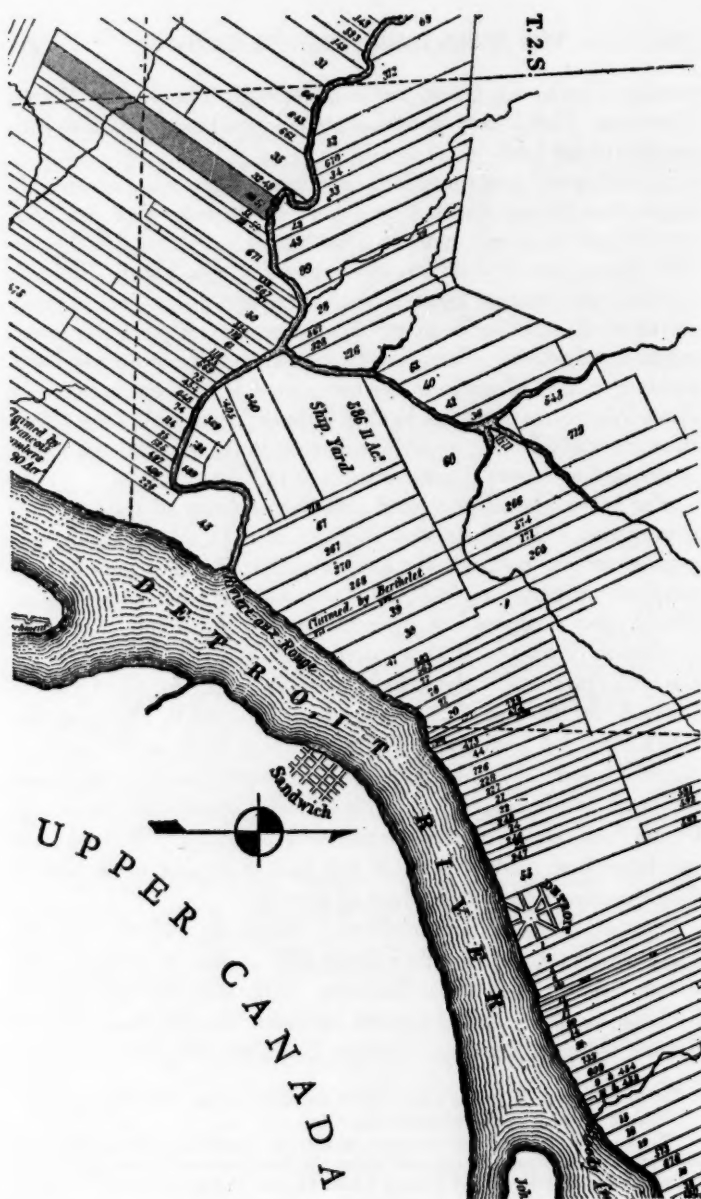
Peter Wilhelm left two children — Elizabeth, probably born in 1820, and Peter, Jr., who died about 1837 at the age of nine. His widow, Salome, died about February, 1832, after her marriage to Rudolph Graden. Thus Elizabeth Wilhelm, the daughter, became the sole owner of the farm. Private Claim 49, the Wilhelm Farm,

<sup>43</sup>Wayne County Engineer's Records in the City-County Building.

<sup>44</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 12:374.

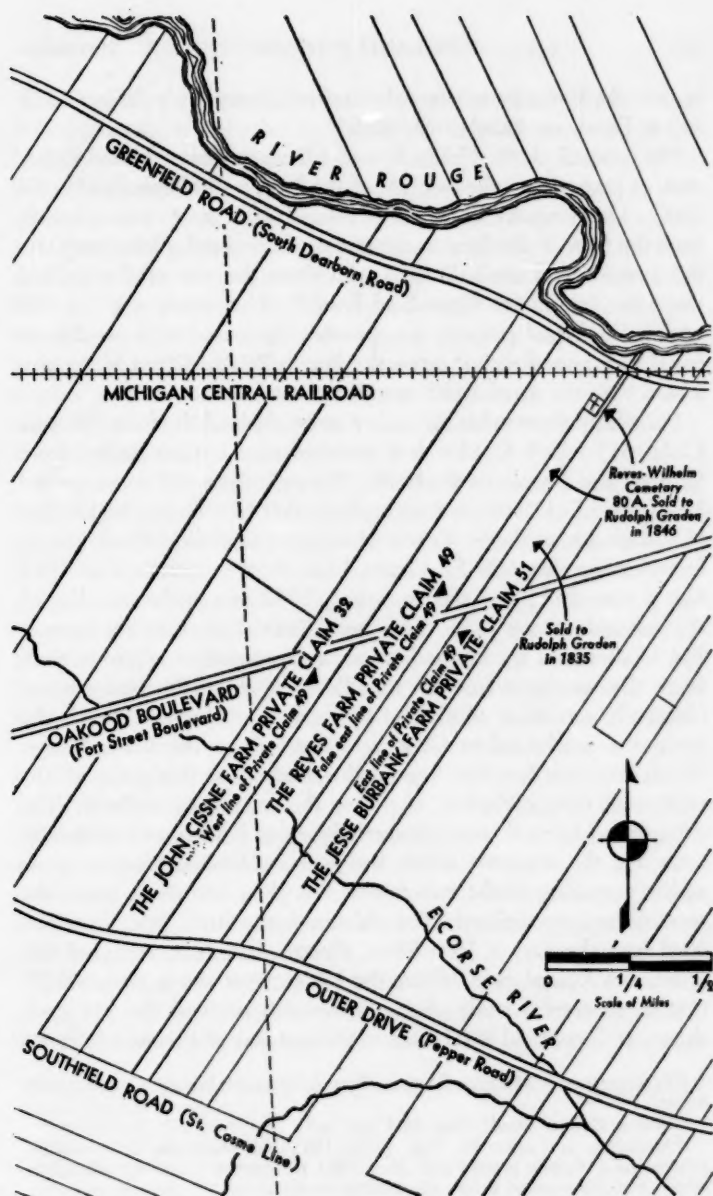
<sup>45</sup>To assist in locating this property, it may be noted that the present Dix Road, south of Schaefer Road, runs along the line between Private Claim 59, the claim immediately east of Private Claim 51, and Private Claim 671.





From Aaron Greeley, *Plan of Private Claims in Michigan Territory* (1810)

LOCATION OF PRIVATE CLAIM 49



Based on Aaron Greeley map, Plan of Private Claims in Michigan Territory (1810)

# THE REVES FARM: PRIVATE CLAIM 49

became the Reves Farm when she married Henry Braly Reves (1812-74) at Dearborn, October 23, 1836.<sup>46</sup>

On June 15, 1846, Henry B. and Elizabeth Reves deeded eighty acres of property on the east side of the farm to Rudolph Graden for \$400. The property conveyed consisted of a long strip running from the back of the farm to the rear of the orchard, plus a strip one rod (sixteen and one-half feet) wide from the rear of the orchard along its east side to Greenfield Road.<sup>47</sup> The access strip for this panhandle-shaped property was presumably joined with another of equal width parallel to it across the line in Private Claim 51, to give a road with the usual width of thirty-three feet.

For nearly three miles the eighty acres adjoined the farm (Private Claim 51) which Graden had acquired eleven years earlier from William and Angelique Burbank. The eighty-acre site was surveyed by A[nson] E. Hathon as running from the River Rouge 14,157 feet to a black ash on the St. Cosme Line (now Southfield Road), 310.2 feet westerly along the St. Cosme Line, thence northward 13,345.2 feet to a marked point, thence easterly 244.2 feet to the west line of the rod-wide access strip. This last-defined line, running easterly 244.2 feet, marks the first indication in the records of what has since been the southern line of the Reves-Wilhelm Cemetery tract. Originally consisting of about 4.15 acres, this cemetery tract is the projection northward to Greenfield Road or to the River Rouge, which is only a few feet beyond the roadway at this point, of the eighty-acre strip, excluding, of course, the one-rod right-of-way. The deed from Henry B. and Elizabeth Reves to Rudolph Graden indicates that the cemetery, which had been established nineteen years earlier according to the monument, was then located at about the rear of the farm orchard. The old farmhouse itself, possibly a survival from the days of John Shaw, though there is no record of this point, was located near "where the bridge went across the creek,"<sup>48</sup> that is, as careful study of maps, descriptions, and the site itself shows, at Greenfield Road close to the east line of Private Claim 49.

<sup>46</sup>Wayne County Marriage Records, liber A:12 in the Wayne County Court-house.

<sup>47</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 28:172.

<sup>48</sup>According to Lucius H. Tate (1859-1952) of Dearborn, a descendant, who recalled digging pottery and other relics around the site of the old house, which had disappeared before his earliest recollections.

With this transaction, the 13,345.2-foot line already described as running northerly from the St. Cosme line and the projection of the 13,345.2-foot line northerly to the Greenfield Road and/or River Rouge became the eastern line of nearly all the remaining portion of the Reves Farm of about three hundred acres. The only exception was the 4.15-acre protrusion of the Reves-Wilhelm Cemetery tract which lay adjacent to the northern portion of the farm, separated from it by the projection of this line, and itself running to Greenfield Road. Many persons concerned with this property have erroneously assumed that this 13,345.2-foot line and its projection were the original eastern line of Private Claim 49, and, as a result, court records,<sup>49</sup> deeds,<sup>50</sup> tax records, and other records have embodied this error, causing much confusion.

Henry and Elizabeth Reeves [sic] deeded a parcel of eight acres to Jacob Schronce for \$200 on January 23, 1840.<sup>51</sup> This property was of irregular shape, running 845 feet along the Greenfield Road, thence three hundred feet upstream along the River Rouge to a post standing in the channel of a small creek, thence 650 feet along the channel of this creek, and then 423 feet along the line parallel to the "line of Jesse Hicks" to the point of beginning. This parcel has become the source of much additional confusion, since some have held that it was in Private Claim 51 to the east of Private Claim 49.

Interest to this parcel appears to be included in the estates of Rudolph Graden in 1861,<sup>52</sup> and of his son, Jacob Graden, in 1869.<sup>53</sup> Jacob Graden's interest was sold to Charles Theeck for \$200. According to the author's recollections, about 1913 the Theeck family occupied the farmhouse on Private Claim 51 and had a family cemetery east of and close to the Reves-Wilhelm Cemetery. Burials from this cemetery were removed about forty years ago, probably to Woodmere Cemetery, Detroit.

On February 24, 1820, Warren Hurd had conveyed title to Private Claim 51 to Nathaniel Champ by a limited warranty deed, excepting one acre previously conveyed to Henry B. Breevort and

<sup>49</sup>See Wayne County Circuit Court, Chancery File 24051 (1902) in the Wayne County Courthouse.

<sup>50</sup>See Wayne County Deeds, liber 774:514.

<sup>51</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 18:631.

<sup>52</sup>Wayne County Probate File 3257.

<sup>53</sup>Wayne County Probate File 3577.

Jesse Hicks. This acre is not further described, but it is stated that it was conveyed on June 2, 1817.<sup>54</sup> However, on February 23, 1823, Nathaniel Champ and his wife Almena deeded a two-thirds undivided interest in "1 acre and 40 rods" on the river, together with a similar interest in a sawmill thereon, apparently powered by "water-works," to Henry B. Breevort for \$100.<sup>55</sup> While no deed to Hicks for this property has been noted, the foregoing transaction would appear to refer to the same acre, and it might be inferred that Hicks owned property on the waterfront in Private Claim 51, as well as in Private Claim 32, which lay on the other or west side of the Reves Farm.

The same eight acres described in the 1840 deed to Shronce were subsequently conveyed, after several changes of ownership, by warranty deed on May 11, 1892, to Joseph Millenbach, from Jacob, Josephine, Joseph, George, and Mathilde Hicks, for \$4,800.<sup>56</sup> From the location of the Millenbach rendering plant at the northwest corner of Private Claim 49, it now appears indisputable that the Shronce parcel, regardless of the problems of title affecting it, was in Private Claim 49, and not in Private Claim 51.<sup>57</sup> It may be noted that in 1904 there was a small stream entering the River Rouge about the middle of Private Claim 32, in addition to the one then flowing back of the Reves-Wilhelm Cemetery and bending northward to enter the river near the boundary line between Private Claims 49 and 51. The former stream may be the one mentioned in the 1840 deed.

There was some confusion over the claims numbers at one time. The Plan of Private Claims in Michigan Territory prepared by Aaron Greeley in 1810,<sup>58</sup> has pairs of duplicate numbering for Private Claims 32 and 49, 49 and 51, and 51 and 59. This may be a source, or a product, of some of the difficulties in earlier descriptions along the River Rouge.

Another source of difficulty has been the tract of thirty-eight acres

<sup>54</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 5:336.

<sup>55</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 6:374.

<sup>56</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 18:631.

<sup>57</sup>See United States Geological Survey, *Michigan: Detroit Quadrangle* (Washington, D.C., 1904).

<sup>58</sup>Plan of Private Claims in Michigan Territory as Surveyed by Aaron Greeley, D. Surveyor, in 1810, in the Burton Historical Collection.

described as the northwest part of Private Claim 49, "originally confirmed to Matthew Donovan and at present [1866] in possession of D[ominique] Riopelle." Archange Jones, widow of William Jones, a Detroit merchant,<sup>59</sup> executed a quit claim deed to Riopelle for this property, January 31, 1866, for \$100.<sup>60</sup>

Riopelle secured 125.6 acres, described as part of Private Claims 32 and 49 (and possibly actually entirely in Private Claim 32) from Thomas and Esther Haffey on March 24, 1859, for \$3,900. The deed was recorded March 24, 1859,<sup>61</sup> and corrected March 20, 1863.<sup>62</sup> Esther Haffey, the wife of Thomas, was the sister of Philip Elsey, whose farm lay about three miles west along the River Rouge. Their eldest daughter, Lydia, married William Henry Reves, son of Henry B. and Elizabeth Wilhelm Reves—typical of the intermarriages that widely linked the Dearborn community of the time. The Archange Jones deed appears to be an attempt to correct title to part of the property deeded to Riopelle by the Haffeys.

There were subsequent sales of various portions of the Reves Farm, such as a sale of acreage at the lower end of the property to John Greusel, pioneer Detroit brickmaker and onetime candidate for mayor, who later became the second husband of Elizabeth Wilhelm Reves. This purchase was made to obtain timber for charcoal for his brickyard.

No attempt to list all the individual transfers has been made in this account. Two years after the death of her husband Henry B. Reves in 1874, Elizabeth Reves held title to 150 acres and Peter Reves, her oldest son, to fifty acres near the Pepper Road (the present Outer Drive), according to an atlas for Wayne County published in 1876. "E. Reves" is also shown as owner of a tract along the bend of the river north of the Shronce parcel.<sup>63</sup> This latter parcel is probably the property covered in the Dominique Riopelle and Archange Jones transactions. The acreages given in the atlas are obviously only approximations. Furthermore, the portion shown as being occupied by Peter Reves was not actually deeded to him, as

<sup>59</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 260:199.

<sup>60</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 115:132.

<sup>61</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 76:476.

<sup>62</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 98:175.

<sup>63</sup>*Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Wayne, Michigan*, 30, "Ecorce [sic] Township" (Chicago, 1876).

is apparent from the records and the subsequent division of the property. The 1876 atlas shows the locations of three houses: the main farmhouse on Greenfield Road in the middle of the farm frontage; and two on Outer Drive,<sup>64</sup> including the one occupied by Peter Reves.

At the death of Elizabeth Wilhelm Reves Greusel in 1899, her farm consisted of about 195 acres, according to the inventory of her estate.<sup>65</sup> In the distribution of the land, the southerly forty-five acres were awarded to Peter Reves, and the balance was divided between the other heirs. In making the division, the records referred to the eastern boundary line of the property being divided (and excepting the 4.15 acre cemetery tract) as the "east line of Private Claim 49" in error. In the distribution, the eastern part of the farm between Oakwood Boulevard then called Fort Street Boulevard and the Peter Reves property at the lower end was assigned to Mary M. Mitzelfeld, while the western part of this section was assigned to the heirs of Amy Wilson. The upper portion of the farm between Oakwood Boulevard and Greenfield Road was similarly divided, the eastern part going to Frank N. Reves, former chairman of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors, and the western portion to the heirs of William H. Reves. Peter, Frank N., and William H. Reves, Mary M. Mitzelfeld, and Amy Wilson were children of Henry B. and Elizabeth Reves. This division assigned the cemetery tract, which appeared as a little jog or appendage lying east of the Frank Reves portion, jointly to Frank N. Reves and to the four surviving children of William H. Reves, then deceased, who were his heirs.<sup>66</sup>

Title to the property north of the Greenfield Road, a narrow strip of irregular width which now in the easterly portion is almost entirely washed away by erosion of the River Rouge, was the subject of later litigation. Several conflicting claims were involved. There was no property of value north of the road that could be recovered, according to the opinion of those who studied the situation,

<sup>64</sup>Greenfield Road crosses the farm at the front close to the River Rouge; Oakwood Boulevard about three-quarters of a mile below; Outer Drive about two miles; and Southfield Road about three miles.

<sup>65</sup>Wayne County Probate File 25566.

<sup>66</sup>Wayne County Circuit Court, Chancery File 24051, *Reves vs. Reves*.



though some rights to this property have never been formally disposed of.

There appears to be no grant on record for the right of ways for Pepper Road (Outer Drive), St. Cosme Road (Southfield Road), Fort Street Boulevard (Oakwood Boulevard), and South Dearborn Road (Greenfield Road) across the Reves Farm tract. However, the accounts of the administrator of the estate of Elizabeth Greusel show an assessment (presumably partial) of \$20 for "opening Fort St. Boulevard."

Grants were also given to the Wabash, St. Louis, and Pacific Railroad, apparently in 1880,<sup>67</sup> and to the Delray and Dearborn branch of the Michigan Central Railroad on December 8, 1894,<sup>68</sup> for right of ways across the farm. The Michigan Central tract, which runs close to the cemetery, is a strip fifty feet wide by twelve hundred and a half feet long, comprising 1.378 acres, that was purchased for \$1,000.

On June 2, 1900, the executors of the estate of Elizabeth Greusel sold a railroad turnout to Matthew P. and Joseph Millenbach for \$2,000.<sup>69</sup> It is probable that the establishment of a rendering plant on this property by the Millenbachs inevitably seriously influenced the future industrial development of this part of the area because of the nature of the enterprise. In the land contract executed by Elizabeth Greusel before her death for this turnout, she retained the right to cross the property at any place, and the buyers agreed to join in the execution of a plat for street opening purposes should she desire to plat her property.

The Peter Reves tract was subsequently sold by him and subdivided. Practically all the other property, except the cemetery tract, was sold by the various heirs to the Solvay Process Company,<sup>70</sup> and the property has, in effect, been reunited under the new owner. It is, with recent and minor exceptions, still unimproved acreage, and is perhaps the largest undivided tract in the immediate vicinity of Detroit except the Ford holdings.

<sup>67</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 231:46.

<sup>68</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 450:146.

<sup>69</sup>Wayne County Deeds, liber 542:313.

<sup>70</sup>See deeds of Mary S. Reves, Elsey B. Reves, *et. al.*, November 3, 1910, Wayne County Deeds, liber 774:514; liber 784:108.

Meanwhile the little piece containing the cemetery, which is believed to be the old homestead lot and orchard, continued to be held jointly by the heirs of William H. and Frank N. Reves, with changes in shares of interest as changes took place in the family. In 1927-28, approximately one acre was condemned for the opening of Wall Street lengthwise through the property, adjoining the cemetery on the west, leaving about three acres.

Although the cemetery property should have been exempted from taxation, the heirs paid taxes upon it in error for many years. In the early 1930's, the property was informally considered to be of historic interest by officials of the city of Melvindale in which it is situated; a new iron pipe fence was installed; and the site was given some landscaping, partly with the aid of Federal government funds. During the depression some of the heirs felt they could not continue to pay taxes upon this property for sentimental reasons alone. Informal efforts to secure tax exemption were unsuccessful. For a number of years the situation was dormant, with taxes spread upon the rolls; the technically long-overdue tax payments as far back as 1941, amounting to \$3,432.58, were reassessed to subsequent years. During this period, with its attention diverted by the war, the family assumed that the property had finally been given its correct status as a cemetery.

However in 1947, the tract was sold for taxes by the state of Michigan, and its desecration and destruction were narrowly averted. A bulldozer was actually at work to level the property when members of the family were able to take legal and other steps to stop the destruction and raised a fund to repurchase the interest of the person who had bought the tax title. Because the formation of a cemetery association or trust to take over the property did not seem feasible, members of the family proposed that the city of Melvindale take over that portion embodying the cemetery proper for use as a memorial and small park, which was done the following year. Through the writer's efforts, the cemetery was designated as a historic site by the Michigan Historical Commission, and its preservation was urged.<sup>71</sup> In 1950 the family erected a fence with a gate to protect the cemetery portion, and some landscaping was under-

<sup>71</sup>Lewis Beeson to George R. Stoddard, November 25, 1947.

taken. The city of Melvindale, which now holds the legal title, has planned further development in keeping with the memorial nature of the site. It is believed to be not only the oldest cemetery, but possibly the oldest site, preserved unchanged from its original usage in the immediate vicinity of Detroit.

The cemetery proper is now at the west end of an irregular lot bounded by Railroad Avenue, Wall Street and Homestead Avenue, and the east line of Private Claim 49.<sup>72</sup> It is known to contain the graves of Nicholas Wilhelm, progenitor of the Wilhelm family in the United States; his son, Peter Wilhelm; Peter's wife, Salome; their son, Peter, Jr., and Adeline Reves, infant daughter of Henry B. and Elizabeth Reves. Lucius H. Tate recalled another burial, that of Harriet Ruff, who was a relative of the family. At one time permission was given for a considerable number of other burials in the area, some of people who were neighbors, not relatives. During the 1920's there were markers for "Mother," "Father," "P.W.," and fragments of other markers, some in position and some removed. Considerable vandalism appears to have occurred in the area about that time, and the locations of smaller markers and graves were lost. A sketch made by the writer sometime between 1921 and 1924 shows that the stone for "Mother" [Salome Wilhelm] was about two feet east and a little to the south of the obelisk which still stands; that for "P.W." [Peter Wilhelm, Jr.] was perhaps six to eight feet further east and in line with a hypothetical grave on the right hand of that indicated by the preceding marker as Salome Wilhelm's—indicating a probable second row of graves. The monument for "A.R." [Adeline Reves] was about six feet from the obelisk on the west side. The markers for "Father" [Peter Wilhelm] and "N.W." [Nicholas Wilhelm] had been displaced and were at the base of the monument on the north. It is probable that all the graves noted were within the area around the monument now marked off as the cemetery area proper.

The cemetery property itself has never been sold since it was acquired by Peter Wilhelm in 1829 (or 1827). It is possible to take a quiet pride in the fact that it represents a family in which, counting from Nicholas Wilhelm to the youngest, there have been

<sup>72</sup>There was no formal grant of the right of ways for Homestead Avenue and Railroad Avenue by the Reves heirs.

nine generations in the Detroit community. For the record, the heirs who held title to this portion until it was taken by the state and then the city of Melvindale in 1947 were: Bessie Rothwell, Maud Marvin, Adeline Green, and Hazel B. Reves, each one-eighth; Anna Dollison, Ida R. Seaman, and Haviland F. Reves, each seven forty-eighths; and Anne Yates, three forty-eighths. Only the last two are still living.

These few acres have shared in some little way with much of the history of the Detroit area—and, in consequence of the concentration of settlement, of Michigan itself—since the early French days. The various owners have generally led quiet, relatively uneventful lives. Great names and great deeds have been only casually associated. In this, this tract of land is typical of the whole exciting, yet basically so wonderfully commonplace story of our Michigan. The past is with us, all around us, in the land we walk and live upon.

Ancestral acres can be preserved relatively intact in remote or rural areas. But in our dynamic and ever-changing milieu, progress inevitably demands change and sacrifice of most of the relics of the past. On this old farm land today may be found industry, hundreds of new homes, municipal service installations, and a large undeveloped tract. In one corner sleep the old pioneers, not quite forgotten, who knew this land when it was near wilderness. May their graves lie undisturbed, the visible memorial through which all future generations may know the ever-renewing continuity of human experience through their roots in our own deep past.

## The Ozark Post Office

*Ethel Hough Mann*

ON JUNE 18, 1884, A SMALL UNITED STATES POST OFFICE was established at Ozark, a diminutive flag stop on the Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic railway. This railroad extended between St. Ignace and Sault Ste Marie in the Upper Peninsula, and had been put into operation two years previously.

About ten years later, my father, James A. Hough and a partner, acquired the holdings of the then bankrupt Martel Furnace Company at Ozark, and immediately became heir to the company's general store, boarding house, and dwellings.

In June, 1893, my uncle, James E. Wagley, who assisted father as clerk and bookkeeper, was appointed postmaster, which position he held until the appointment of father, on May 26, 1894. Father served until his death in 1916. I had long acted as assistant to father and on May 1, 1916, was sworn into office, until a successor could be found and appointed. Conduct of the office was practically thrust upon me!

Father had bought out his partner and kept busy with his many business activities. He was interested in lumbering and the production of charcoal. For this latter business, wood was cut and burned in huge, dome-like kilns. He also carried on farming.

Early in 1900, father sent samples of abundant underlying and outcropping rock to the state geological department for analysis. Reports proved that it was composed largely of a high grade dolomite, necessary, with a greater quantity of limestone, a softer rock, in open-hearth burning, in the production of steel. Eventually, it was quarried and shipped to various iron works. Quarrying, as developed by father, became a major industry at Ozark and was thriving at the time of his death.

Mother had no trouble disposing of the quarries and the greater part of the real estate, but I was left with no adequate quarters in which to conduct Uncle Sam's business. Formerly the post office occupied a goodly corner of the store. Mail was dispatched

twice daily and was transported to and from the railway on foot. This was before the days of voluminous parcel post. In winter it often became necessary to walk on snowshoes; sometimes with sack drawn on a toboggan; sometimes on horseback or with horses hitched to some sort of ancient horse-drawn vehicle. Arrival of the mail was for the community the highlight of the day.

When the time arrived for the dispatch of mail, the chore boy or handy man about the place, abandoned his washing of pots and pans, his potato peeling, the carrying of wood to the various buildings, the cleaning and filling of kerosene lamps, or whatever he might at the time be doing, to carry the mail in a locked canvas sack to the railroad. Here the sack was hung upon a metal crane from which it was snatched by an adjustable steel arm, operated by the mail clerk from within the mail car of the swiftly moving train. With no means of checking as to the time of the arrival of trains, a long, dreary wait was always a possibility. Occasionally someone nailed a few old boards together to erect a crude shelter, which sooner or later might fall down or be burned, but more often there was no protection from the weather.

The task of acting as mail messenger as a part of the postal service had fallen into my unwilling hands. I had been permitted to occupy the accustomed place while seeking a replacement for the virtual vacancy. A clause in the contract with the bonding company stated that in the event of a vacancy by resignation of the postmaster, provision would be made to fill the vacancy—but nothing was said as to when.

It is amusing now to consider how naïve I was while awaiting this "mythical" somebody. For instance, when the supply of money order forms was exhausted and a new supply sent by registered mail from Washington, I promptly registered them back, explaining that I thought it advisable to discontinue money order service, since I now had no means of protecting forms and funds. I had previously explained this to the regional post office inspector. A sharp letter, rushed to me from Washington, in reply informed me that the refusal to issue and pay money orders "will be sufficient cause for your removal from office." Daily, I waited for just that!

Time approached for me to accompany my mother to Detroit for the remainder of the winter. Still no one with a yen to become the new postmaster at Ozark appeared.

Finally, came the inspector. In those early, peaceful days a local inspector more or less "let sleeping dogs lie." So long as law and order prevailed in the small office, we saw him rarely. There was a keen efficiency in our seeming inefficiency. Honesty was a matter of course, even though we made some of our own rules. The lot of the inspector was not a happy one. The only means of travel was by rail, and few trains operated. Lacking public accommodations, the inspector was often the unwitting guest of the postmaster's family. In the present instance, no visitor could have been more warmly welcomed. However, he soon accepted the fact of no applicant. The only solution seemed to be to discontinue the office. No postmaster—no post office. Here was one of those rare emergencies spelling trouble for the inspector. At last, rather than lose the office, with possible difficulty in future re-establishment, the owner of a small quarry located on the railroad a mile south of the present location agreed to erect a small building and apply for removal of office and appointment as postmaster. Work began and it was agreed to be ready for occupancy on a certain date, but the project was soon discontinued. However, I had not forgotten the verbal agreement while "possessing my soul in patience" until relieved of my unhappy burden, with winter in the offing.

On the morning of the date of my scheduled release, I really took matters into my own hands, by compiling an inventory after I had brought the morning mail from the train and distributed it. I packed the impedimenta, laid the small, now empty cabinet on a long toboggan and without announcement, began the mile-long trek to the quarry, arriving at the dinner hour. The cook, a rotund and good-natured lady, upon whom would evolve the actual duties of the office, considered this a joke on her, as she watched my approach from afar; laughing so loudly and long, that the entire crew left their noonday meal to learn the cause of the hilarity. The cabinet was hastily installed in the "cook shanty" as temporary quarters and I walked out—a free soul! I went down to assist for several mornings until a routine was established.



The building was subsequently completed and the arrangement lasted for over a year.

Seven postmasters, seventeen years, and three moves later, (the seven postmasters included my brother James A. Hough, Jr., who served for eleven months) I became postmaster of the Ozark post office to fill an emergency. I was now Ethel Mann and served from October 30, 1933, until March 31, 1952. A month before the latter date a tragic fire of undetermined origin destroyed my home, including my place of business and the post office. No personal effects were saved; but post office cash, stamped paper, money order forms, and savings bond stock, also partial current records were in my hands as I fled from the building. Friends supplied temporary shelter for the remnants of the post office, my mother, and me. Thus was erased in a few moments what had been for years a tradition in the family. A capable and understanding inspector worked with me to bring order out of the seeming chaos—depending on late central office records, my memory, and the meager records saved. Even as in early days, small offices, serving small communities, assume many outside tasks and obligations which are taken for granted and for the most part cheerfully performed. Often the postmaster is regarded as an authority on matters outside his realm. During the brief time served during World War I, I assisted with and wrote letters for patrons. We conducted national drives for funds. I have loaned money to patrons for purchase of money orders,—for taxes, or other payments due, and never lost anything thereby. I served as country correspondent for nearby town newspapers. In short, the United States post office constituted the heart of the community which it served. As a retired federal employee, I receive a small annuity based on deductions from salary earned. I shall always feel that I have an interest in the post office at Ozark, Mackinac County.

## I am a Teacher

*Inez Sheldon Tyler*

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN SCHOOLS. Before I was born, my Father had been superintendent of schools in Napoleon, a small town in Ohio, where he fell in love with my mother who was one of his primary teachers. I was the sixth of their seven children.

One of my earliest recollections is starting to school in Bryan, Ohio, in 1882, at the age of five, carrying my new little blue covered reader. I can still see the colored picture of the two old-fashioned girls with a small rocking chair and under it the sentences: "This is my little rocking chair. I love to rock in it. Would you like to rock in my chair? You may if you want to."

Then another picture comes to mind: a train and many people and under it the sentences: "Look! Look! The train is coming! It is the Chicago train and it is full of people!" Only I glibly pronounced it "Chick-a-go."

My favorite game in those days was playing school. Paper dolls, cut from *Buttericks*, were arranged in rows and marched back and forth to imaginary classes.

At six, my father, by then a lawyer, moved and I was introduced to Toledo schools where Superintendent Guiteau reigned for many years. His small son, Eddie, was in my class and was my hero. I can still see graceful Miss Bangs, the principal, as she glided from room to room, and kindly Sarah Mulholland as she heard us read and spell. I used to emulate them both in my paper-doll classroom.

Those were good schools. We stood up each morning for calisthenics. At the counts, "one-two-three-four," out to the front and back would go our right arm; one-two-three-four, and out would go our left arm; then both arms; then alternately; frontwise and sideways, up and down. Mischievous boys behind us would accidentally give us a punch sometimes, but we learned to give as well as take. Written spelling nearly proved my undoing. Day after day I would miss the word "countenance." The other children must

have learned it before I came. I didn't know what it meant and persisted in spelling it with a "cow." My consolation when I was transferred from the old building at the Warren Street school to the new building was that I had made my escape from that dreadful "countenance." For years I hated the word.

At eight, we moved to Hillsdale, a college town in Michigan; and I was introduced to the one-room school, so to speak, though this had two rooms. The first four grades were in the primary part and the next three in the main part. We called them classes instead of grades — A, B, and C. I was put in the B class. How I loved that school! It was so interesting to listen to the older ones as they recited. We "toed the mark" when we stood up to spell and "left off head." We pointed out places on the colored map and learned the capitals of the different states by singing them: "The state of Main — Augusta, on the Kennebec River; the state of Maine — Augusta, on the Kennebec River. New Hampshire — Concord, on the Merrimac River; New Hampshire — Concord, on the Merrimac River. Vermont — Montpelier, on the Onion River; Vermont — Montpelier, on the Onion River. Massachusetts — Boston, on the Boston Harbor; Massachusetts — Boston, on the Boston Harbor, and so on. We sang lustily through the Atlantic states, but were a little shaky when we got farther west, as I remember.

To be allowed to diagram upon the blackboard was the achievement supreme. I can still recall with pride my infinitive phrases perched on scaffolds when used as subjects or complements in such sentences as: "To err is human; to forgive divine."

Our teacher, Bessie Brewster Rideout, a descendant of Elder Brewster, was stern but very humane. We always had morning exercises with Scripture reading, and the Lord's Prayer was recited in unison as we stood reverently. After the noon recess she would read to us for about fifteen minutes. I remember how spellbound we would sit as she read us Homer Greene's "The Blind Brother" from the current *Youth's Companion*. We learned more about mines and mining than pages of text books could ever teach us.

The stories in our McGuffey readers opened new worlds to me. To this day when I am inclined to toss a piece of good string into the wastebasket the story of the two boys and whiplcord stays my

hand. The bundle of fagots which could not be broken when kept tied together but which was easily severed when apart was a wonderful and never-to-be-forgotten lesson on "In union there is strength." Those years are the impressionable ones and demand the finest in teacher selection.

Then a few years later on to high school. "Town" and "gown" were separated. The college was on College Hill, but the high school was a mile away through the business district. We had four teachers: the superintendent, principal, preceptress and a German minister who came in for classes in the afternoon. Here I learned to love literature from the little "Ten Cent Classics." I nearly passed out when I came to those awful "Ditch-digging," "pipe-draining," and "hands of a clock pointing" examples from the "Miscellany" of Robinson's old arithmetic. However, when I had to teach them in my first country school a few years later, they stood me in good stead. I can still recall the evenings father and I would sit at the dining-room table under the kerosene hanging-lamp and figure on the carefully folded bread wrapping paper—which he always saved for just such purposes.

About this time, in the early nineties, I went to spend a year with my sister in Chicago. Here I was privileged to attend Hyde Park High School under Chicago's great educator for many years, William McAndrew. He was then, I believe, only a principal, but we all stood in great awe of him. Here I learned my "amo, amas, amat" and the intricacies of x, y and z. Most clearly of all stands the teaching of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. Our elderly woman teacher must have loved her subject and she passed her enthusiasm on to us. We were taught to read it with expression, memorize special passages, and dramatize the characters. We were segregated by grades in smaller classrooms, but would all go upstairs to the assembly room for chapel and singing lessons under Dr. Tomlinson. I loved that!

I also loved the adventure of riding to and from school on the Cottage Grove cable cars. Sometimes I would have to walk home. I blush to say we sometimes matched pennies during the half hour recess period and I frequently lost my car fare home; but the walk down Drexel Boulevard was pleasant and I generally had company.

I returned to Hillsdale high school, wiser in the ways of the

world, and continued there until my graduation in 1894. I remember the kindly German minister who started us in the First German Reader with "Was ist das? Das ist ein mann. Ist das Herr Hammer? Ya, das ist Herr Hammer. Ist Herr Hammer ein Deutscher? Nein, Herr Hammer ist ein Americaner." He took us all through *William Tell* and *Hermann and Dorothea*.

That old assembly room stands out clearly in my mind: rostrum across the front with the teacher's desk at one end and at the other end the piano, on which different students played as we marched in an orderly manner up and down the aisles and into the two recitation rooms or to the benches in the front of the assembly room, as the case might be. A loud chord told us that we might be seated. Orderly, regimented perhaps, but of great value nevertheless.

Of equal value were the Scripture readings that dear professor Sammy Gier used to give us each morning. The most beautiful of the Psalms and other Bible passages were learned there; and, by me, never forgotten. In the back of the assembly room were rows of bookcases. If *Beacon Lights of History* could talk what tales they could tell of notes hidden between their pages, placed there by some admiring swain from the masculine side of the room to be later retrieved by some demure damsel on the distaff side. Four fingers raised meant Volume IV. We learned to look in the correct one. Yes, I plead guilty with the rest. I also fed on other books there: White's *Principles of Teaching*, Pestalozzi's *Leonard and Gertrude*, and Holland's *Bittersweet*, being among those that I remember. When I came to take the county examination for teaching, which all seniors were allowed to take if they cared to, that reading helped me to pass the "Theory and Art" with a grade higher than any other candidate.

Never have I had a more thrilling moment than the one when the letter came that told me I had passed. As I was under age, I had to wait for my regular teacher's certificate, but by September (after June graduation) I had it.

Now to get a school! Father hitched up our old black horse, Billy, to the single buggy and we drove forth one hot August day to locate one. We stopped near each schoolhouse to inquire where the director lived. Most of the teachers had already been hired; but we finally found a school near Whitetown, in the Howell District, six-

teen miles from home, which I was able to get after interviewing the director, assessor, and the one other member of the board. Tired, but happy, we drove home. I was to start the next week and was to receive \$18 a month, out of which I was to pay \$1.50 for room and board. I lived with the mother of the director, John Howell. She was an elderly Dutch woman, eighty years of age, and lived in a log house a half mile from the schoolhouse.

My pupils, sixteen in number, most of them girls, were very likeable children and smart. The school was absolutely bare of any furnishings except the rude pine benches and desks for the children, a teacher's desk, a stove, and a water pail and dipper. To pass the water, which had to be brought from up the road, was a great privilege. I had all grades and I gave them all the methods I had learned: calisthenics from the Toledo schools, music and literature from Hyde park, and arithmetic from Robinson's *Miscellany*. I loved having real flesh and blood to work on instead of paper dolls cut from *Butterick* fashions.

That prince of Michigan educators, Walter H. French, superintendent of public instruction for many years, was then my county commissioner. It was he who granted me my teacher's certificate; and his first visit to my school was like an oasis of pure water.

Another influence was Henry Pattengill; "Old Pat" everyone called him. Under his wing, I went later to Buffalo, in 1898, to attend my first National Educational Association meeting when Nicholas Murray Butler and Booker T. Washington so thrilled us all at the convention with their oratory—as did William Jennings Bryan with his splendid "Cross of Gold" speech also delivered in Buffalo at that time.

I remember I took my five year old bicycle and wore a knee length skirt over silk bloomers and long tan twelve button gaiters. My minister brother, whom I visited, was pastor of the People's Church in Niagara Square in Buffalo, and he was quite shocked to see me thus attired. He was reconciled when he saw me join many other teachers who pedaled down Delaware Avenue to a country club where we were all entertained at a tea.

Old Pat's *Knapsack*, a collection of songs, was in daily use and the children loved to sing. Their voices would ring out so merrily that the farmers in the distant fields would sometimes stop to listen and

occasionally join in; although one old grouch did complain that he did not know when that teacher "larned them children anything."

The two and one-half months' term passed all too quickly. For the winter term of four months I took a school nearer to my home, in the Nethaway District, about five miles away.

This school tried my mettle to the utmost for here were young women and young men older than I. They had me scared. Since it was the general custom for the boys to drive out the teacher in the winter term, the director, Mr. Millard French, had hired me with the clause in my contract that if at the end of the month I was not giving satisfaction I was to resign. Small wonder I was homesick! I spent the first week in the director's family until I could locate a permanent boarding place. His mother and two sisters were wonderful to me and tried in every way to cater to my appetite, but their food nearly choked me. It was delicious and well prepared, but those who have experienced homesickness know how I felt. The nicer they were to me the more I disliked them. I thought Friday night would never come and did not wait for my father to drive out for me but started to walk home.

I declared I would not go back—but I did, and soon I grew to like the school and the scholars. At the end of the month I saw the director coming up the road. He was a huge man weighing over three hundred pounds. I was sure he was coming to tell me I was to leave; but, greatly to my relief, it was only to tell me where to have the green chunk-wood piled which would be delivered the next week.

This school had more up-to-date equipment. The pupils were very bright and I had to study nights to keep ahead of them. My Robinson's *Miscellany* again saved the day, for when one of the big boys (as was his usual custom I learned later) asked me to work a certain catch problem in the class, I was able to step to the board and do it with ease. From then on those boys literally ate out of my hand, and I was in great demand at all the church sociables, bobsleigh parties, and country dances. That winter I learned to "Skip to my Lou" which was with them a great favorite. "Swing that girl with the ten-cent shoe"; "Gone again, what shall I do?" and "I'll get another one prettier than you"; were some of the calls that I remember.



My class in United States History consisted of three young ladies and they knew Anderson's history from beginning to end. I could start them anywhere and away they would go. I taught my little class of five in Hutchinson's *Oral Physiology* to name all of the bones of the body: frontal-forehead, occipital-back of head, etc. Also to the older ones I taught the lists of adjective pronouns: all, another, any, both, each, either, enough, few, former, little, latter, many, much, neither, none, one, other, same, several, such, this, that, these, those, whole; lists, I am sure they have never forgotten (I know I haven't), from the red Reed and Kellog's grammar. And all of this for \$25. a month, out of which I paid \$2 a week for my room and board.

I invested part of my earnings in buying material and having made two dresses with huge fiber-chamois lined mutton leg sleeves and three hair-cloth lined godet organ-roll pleats in the back of the skirts which were flaring and touched the ground. I remember later sitting for my picture in the aforesaid gowns which, on account of the width of the sleeves, had to be mounted the long way of the card.

The spring term of that first year of teaching in 1895 found me in the home-town schools in charge of a third and fourth grade. A few miles away in Litchfield stood the schoolhouse where Rose Hartwick Thorpe wrote "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight;" and also the school in Jonesville attended by the great London merchant, Harry Selfridge. In a letter from him some years ago, he wrote me that the desk at which he used to sit had been sent to him in London and was one of his cherished possessions. The old days did have much of worth and should be revered.

I continued in grade work for some years in my home town with the exception of two years in the town of Owosso, where Governor Dewey was born; but it was before his day.

By this time (1903) I had reached the magnificent salary of \$38 a month. Then came marriage and the rearing of five children. Through their progress I became familiar with kindergarten methods and reading without first learning the letters. I became convinced of the validity of this chart method of teaching reading after hearing five children (born within seven and one-half years) "Run with me to the tree."

World War I came with its dearth of teachers and I was drafted into the service, but not unwillingly, and this time in the capacity

of high-school teacher of English, algebra, and later geometry. This meant for me correspondence courses, extension classes, summer school, and classes in residence after school hours, as I was fortunate to live or teach in college towns.

Without losing a day of teaching, I was able to get my A.B. degree in 1925 just in time to be able to comply with the new state law that all high school teachers must have an A.B. degree. I graduated two years ahead of my oldest daughter.

For many years I was kept on my toes in educational circles, with not only my own education but also that of my children—all of whom I saw through high school, two sons through their junior year in college, and our two daughters to their A.B. degrees from my alma mater, Hillsdale College.

I have seen many new methods introduced, some to live awhile and then to die. Vertical writing displaced the old Spencerian system, and later came the Palmer method. I taught them all. I have done much study in educational measurements, given many Binet tests, and calculated IQ's for hundreds of students. Panel discussions have taken the place of the old question and answer method. Military discipline has given way to freedom of speech and action. Sometimes I have thought too much freedom; but I have tried to keep an open mind and have sifted out the best in the newer education in all its phases. Parent-teacher organizations came, child study courses, community programs, and in later years classes in adult education in cultural and avocational fields, public forums on racial problems, community health, and child conservation. All have helped the parent to understand the schools, and as the adult education program is fostered will lead, I believe, to better instruction and better schools.

Fifty years of public service, twenty-six of which were spent as a teacher in grade and high schools of Michigan, could not help but teach me a certain degree of self-sacrifice and subordination of personal interests for the welfare of the many.

There was satisfaction in infusing my knowledge into receptive minds of not only my own five children but also the thousands of pupils who came under my tutelage and influence during those years when I played the dual role of homemaker and teacher.

Besides teaching literature, algebra, and geometry, during the years 1920-33, I was also in charge of a large study hall which seated two hundred pupils, ranging from freshmen to seniors. My services were often in demand for help in their Latin constructions or mathematical problems . . . all but chemistry and physics which I avoided and detested as much as I did the old word "countenance" of my childhood days. I gave freely of my time and what talent I had.

When ill health, a tired heart, ended my career in the schoolroom in 1933, I turned to wider fields and far-flung horizons. The untimely death of my second son caused me to turn to poetry to assuage my grief; and I resumed a creative urge with which I had not had contact since my high school days.

I sent several of my verses to the *Detroit Free Press* and they were published. The *Epworth Herald* gave me my first pay for a poem called "Serenity." I conceived the idea of starting a poetry magazine of my own, and wrote to several poets, whose work I had admired, and asked them to submit a poem for it. As president, at the time, of the American Association of University Women in Albion, it was really one of my projects.

I was delighted with the response to my invitation. The well known poet W. W. Christman of the Helderhills, Bozenhill, New York, was the first to reply; and he remained one of my good friends until his death.

In 1933 I became founder, sole owner, and editor of *Blue Moon*. I watched it grow into one of the outstanding poetry magazines in the poetry field.

I came to Washington in 1934, following three of my children who had obtained Civil Service appointments in the general accounting office of the treasury department and bureau of standards. My husband, not being able to withstand the Washington climate, remained in Michigan with our oldest daughter, Jessie, who married Robert E. Sharer, then director of adult education in the state department at Lansing. Mr. Tyler passed away in 1944.

After moving to Washington, I was soon called upon to give my services to the District of Columbia Federation of Women's Clubs. I organized their poetry clinic and conducted classes in poetry tech-

nique for three years. I was also poetry editor of their official magazine, *The District of Columbia Clubwoman*.

All who cared to come were cordially welcomed to our poetry clinic sessions in the Hotel Raleigh and the Hotel Roosevelt. Poets, old and young, and from various walks of life, received instruction, encouragement and understanding, without cost. We held two regular meetings monthly from October through May. Many who have gone far in the poetry field still remember with gratitude the unique and highly instructive poetry clinic and recall the beautiful festivals held each spring and autumn over which I presided. The historic arts club (one-time home of President Monroe) was an appropriate setting for these poetical fests; and the well known and much loved poetry mentor Dr. Charles Edward Russell was always an interested listener and participant, and contributed to our prize program generously, which contributions were continued by Mrs. Russell following his death and until her own.

Contests of various forms of poetry were sponsored by *Blue Moon* and the awards were made at the poetry festivals. Contests were open to all, for it was not in the District of Columbia poets alone that my interest was centered. My hands were continually outstretched to poets in every state of our United States—emotionally as well as geographically—and to a few poets in foreign countries, who had discovered *Blue Moon* and learned to love it. That which really counts with me is the spark lighted at the shrine of beauty and truth, and which is kept burning at the altar of sincerity. Who can say—each one of us who follow the teaching profession—how many of those illuminating sparks we have helped to light throughout the years!

A teacher who has the gift of intelligently imparting knowledge must necessarily possess executive ability. Not for personal glory or for self aggrandizement, but to be of service, I have accepted offices in various organizations to which I have belonged. I have constantly found myself launched into heading literary, educational, and fraternal groups. . . . I was president of Albion Teachers' Club and of the Albion branch of the American Association of University Women.

I have accepted membership in literary clubs, poetry societies, and patriotic organizations, some of which are Columbia Heights Arts Club, Twentieth Century Club, National Mothers' Memory Club, poetry societies of Michigan, Ohio, Virginia, America, Midwest League, American Academy of Poets, Eastern Star, Daughters of American Revolution, Daughters of Founders and Patriots, and Daughters of Colonial Wars.

I am a patroness of Michigan's Alpha chapter, Pi Beta Phi, and a member of Delta Kappa Gamma—Teachers' Honor Society, Sunshine and Community Club, Gunton Temple Church Guild, Writers League of Washington, and Hillsdale Woman's Club, which recently conferred upon me an honorary membership for writing a poetical saga of its fifty years. The Mark Twain and Eugene Field Societies, the Writers League of Washington, and the Columbia Heights Arts Club also conferred honorary memberships upon me.

Relative to the many before-mentioned contests held by *Blue Moon*, Charles Edward Russell said:

Some evolved a peculiar interest, particularly in respect to the rarer among the fixed forms of verse, in which the results caused us to pause and wonder. The fixed form called the "Glose," common in old Spanish and Portuguese and some specimens of it in French, had until 1938 but one specimen in English and American poetry. The poet selects a quatrain from some older poet and writes a stanza of ten lines on each successive line of the quatrain, following the rhyme scheme of ababbcdcd, the last line being, in regular sequence, the lines from the older poet's quatrain called the *texte*. We had fifty-three entries from widely dispersed communities showing an extent and verity of the poets' interest at which we marveled. Our text was Swinburne's "Mother of Months" starting "when the hounds of spring are on winter's traces." Our first contest on the Petrarchean Sonnet produced over one hundred entries. We revived the old Chaucerian Roundel, comatose and without an example for four hundred years. Contests in Villanelles, triplets, rondeaux, ballades, and roundels all exceeded our expectations, and repeatedly demonstrated the wide expanse of the poetic interest. Prizes in money and books were given, but contests involving only the insubstantial reward of honor elicited no fewer offerings than those involving some portion of the coin of the realm.

*Blue Moon* has published 72 issues, averaging 125 poems in each. All issues have been beautifully bound in blue by the Library of

Congress and are on their shelves, as well as in the college libraries of Harvard, Brown, and Hillsdale, and in the New York City Public Library.

After my retirement, *Blue Moon* was my major interest until December, 1957. Since I passed my eighty-first birthday on April 30, I have given up my magazine and many of my outside interests to devote my entire time and energy to my own creative writing. In the fall of 1957 I brought out a book of my own poems "Ancestral Portraits and Other Poems" which went into the second issue and is now exhausted.

As I think back over my very full life of eighty-one years, I wonder if I have "shared with my generation the truth, the humor and the beauty of a remarkable experience." How much will continue after I am gone?

The following quotation is a beautiful tribute to the teaching profession:

An ancient ruler decided that he would give highest honor to the one adjudged the greatest of his subjects. One was cited for his great acquisitions of wealth and property. It was pointed out that he had carried the country's trade to the far corners of the known world, had brought back great treasures in goods and had advanced the commerce within and without the country.

Another was championed for his knowledge of the law, for his justice in administering the ruler's edicts . . . yet another for his powers of healing the sick . . . and many others each of whom had brought honor to himself, to the king, and to the people of his land.

Near the end of the day there came yet another champion leading his candidate, an old woman. Her body was stooped, her clothes worn, her face was wrinkled, her eyes dim, but from them shone the bright light of knowledge, understanding, and love.

"Who is this?" the king demanded, "and what can she have done to be worthy of my honor?"

You have seen and heard all of these others," was the reply. "This is their teacher."

A mighty shout arose from all the people as the king descended from his throne to make his tribute to the one who had given all the others the training to fit them for their work.

Though the teacher's role may seem difficult and unrewarding at times, from my own experience I can tell you that there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

## Michigan News

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN held a special spring meeting at Wayne State University on March 24 and 25, 1961, in conjunction with the sixty-fifth annual meeting of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters. Society trustees met during the morning and afternoon on Friday, March 24. They and other members of the society attended the luncheon of the academy's history and political science section on Friday and heard an excellent paper by Dr. Frederick D. Williams of Michigan State University on "The Civil War Career of James A. Garfield." Among the papers delivered at the history sessions on Friday, papers on Senator Arthur Vandenberg, William Austin Burt, and Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, read respectively, by Paul E. Hubbell of Eastern Michigan University, Alan S. Brown of Western Michigan University, and Richard W. Schwarz of Andrews University, were of particular interest to students of Michigan history. Friday evening the society members attended the annual Michigan Academy dinner.

On Saturday, March 25, the society joined with the history and political science section in sponsoring a lively discussion of the topic, "Michigan and the Civil War." Marquis E. Shattuck of Detroit, society president, presided. The panel consisted of six men representing different areas of interest in Michigan Civil War history including Floyd Haight, chairman of the Michigan Civil War Centennial Observance Commission; Dr. Russell E. Bidlack of the Department of Library Science, University of Michigan; Dr. Albert Castel of the history department of Western Michigan University; James K. Flack, Jr., of Birmingham, representing the Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table of Michigan; Irving Katz, executive secretary of Congregation Beth El, Detroit; and Dr. George S. May, research archivist of the Michigan Historical Commission. Some of the areas that have been covered in research on Michigan's role in the war, what needs to be done, and the plans for observing the war's centennial were among the subjects discussed by the panel and by the audience, which was the largest of any of those attending the sessions of the history and political science group.



The success of this first attempt of the Historical Society to hold a spring meeting as part of the annual meeting of the Michigan Academy has encouraged society officers to hope that this may become a regular part of the society's yearly program. The society, therefore, working with the history and political science section, plans a similar program for the 1962 Michigan Academy meeting which will be held at the University of Michigan, March 23 and 24.

AT THE 54TH ANNUAL MEETING of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association meeting on April 20, 1961, Mr. Henry E. Edmunds, manager of the Ford Motor Company's research and information department, presented a \$5,000 grant from the Ford Company Fund to Mr. Fletcher M. Green, president of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, to be awarded as a prize for the author of the "best publishable book-length manuscript on the history of transportation in America." Anyone interested may obtain more information from W. D. Aeschbacher, Secretary-Treasurer of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, 1500 R. Street, Lincoln 8, Nebraska.

## Book Reviews and Notes

*The Diary of James J. Strang.* Deciphered, transcribed, introduced and annotated by Mark A. Strang. With a foreword by Russel B. Nye. (Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1961. xlv, 78 p. Illustrations. \$3.75.)

James J. Strang is primarily remembered today in Sunday supplement terms, as the leader of a group of Mormons who in the 1850's established on Beaver Island in Lake Michigan a kingdom of God on earth, only to be assassinated after a six-year reign, after which his "kingdom" was dispersed into the world. Since it was not until 1844 that Strang was converted to Mormonism, it may not be immediately apparent what interest his fragmentary diary could have, kept between 1831 and 1836 (roughly, from his 19th to his 24th year).

But make no mistake, this is one of the great American diaries, a fascinating human document, approach it as you will. Students of Mormon history will read it with greatest interest, for it amounts to a case study in what goes into the making of a Mormon prophet, opening up in Strang's life what is almost totally inaccessible to us in the life of his predecessor, Joseph Smith. But it is also a wonderfully revealing record of the Jacksonian era, reflecting from so unlikely a place as Chautauqua County, New York, the ideas, emotions, personal preoccupations, and indeed the whole social and intellectual climate of the 1830's, as you will find in such small compass nowhere else. And without regard to the significance of its entries for Strang's own future in the area of religion, the diary is a record of a young man's disturbed inner life well worthy of study and meditation.

A version of this diary was printed by Milo M. Quaife in 1930 as an appendix to his *The Kingdom of St. James*. In so doing, he performed no service to scholarship, nor to his own reputation as a scholar, for in a manner simply incomprehensible for one with his training and experience, Dr. Quaife mistranscribed much of the record, put the pages together in mistaken sequences, and did not even attempt to decipher passages Strang wrote in an elementary substitution cipher. In now republishing the diary, Strang's venerable grandson has done well all the things Dr. Quaife did badly. Though my own reading of the manuscript is not on all fours with his, with one exception the variations in text are unimportant. Possibly I am at fault, but one passage Mr. Strang decodes as a general remark, here rendered in italics, "my great designs of revolutionizeing governments and countrie[s]," I found to be

specific in meaning, "my great designs of revolutionizing government of *countrie*."

This particular diary entry, by the way, made during the period of the nullification crisis, is just one of the many extraordinary reveries which preoccupied the youthful Strang from time to time. He was resolved in one way or another to leave his mark on history, perhaps as a great general like Napoleon (though war was murder, from which he shrank), or perhaps as the destined consort of Queen Victoria. Strang's grandson notes such admissions in the diary without flinching, finding that personal ambition in Strang warred with a finally decisive need to dedicate his life selflessly to the welfare of his fellow men.

Perhaps an understandable desire to vindicate his grandfather in the face of much idle vilification over the years has prevented Mr. Strang from achieving a wholly balanced view either of the diary or of the man it reveals, but his gentle championing of James J. Strang helps to redress the balances, and deserves respect and attention. Mr. Strang has heightened the value of his book by appending a useful bibliography of James J. Strang's works, and of the principal publications concerning him.

*Bancroft Library*

DALE L. MORGAN

*The Long Ships Passing.* By Walter Havighurst. (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1961. 292 p. Maps, illustrations, index. Paperback \$1.65.)

A paperback edition, identical otherwise with the original hard cover which appeared in 1942, this printing will find a ready welcome among readers and students of the Great Lakes. It is a stirring story of ships from the time of Etienne Brulé and the birch canoe to the era of the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Not only the story of ships on the waters but the changes on the land adjoining the Great Lakes makes this a most interesting and readable book.

*Father Abraham's Children; Michigan Episodes in the Civil War.* By Frank B. Woodford. (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1961. xiv, 305 p. Illustrations. \$6.50.)

In the decade since his Lewis Cass biography appeared, Frank B. Woodford, chief editorial writer of the *Detroit Free Press*, has been one of Michigan's most prolific authors of historical works. Now in *Father Abraham's Children* (the title has little connection with the book's contents) Woodford turns from the biographical studies for which he

has become renowned to the study of that most famous period in American history — the Civil War.

This may be, as another reviewer, William McCann, has said, Woodford's best book. Written in a popular style (which does not excuse the omission of an index), with footnote and bibliographical material tossed together in an appendix in a manner that will not frighten the general reader but will infuriate the scholar, this ought to become Woodford's most popular book.

The author, both in the subtitle and in his preface, makes it clear that this is not the much-needed full-scale history of Michigan during the Civil War. It is, rather, a collection of some twenty "episodes" in the state's wartime history, plus a chapter on the Underground Railroad (which Woodford insists on calling "Railway") of ante bellum days. The book is much like an anthology of best-loved poems or short stories. Here are such old friends as the story of the mobilization of Michigan's forces at the outbreak of war, the arrival in Washington of the 1st Michigan Infantry and its gallant stand at First Bull Run, the terrible ordeal of the 24th Michigan Infantry at Gettysburg ("Michigan's moment of imperishable glory," Woodford calls it), the role of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade in throwing back the Confederates at Rummel's farm, the thwarting of the Johnson's Island plot, the *Sultana* disaster, and the capture of Jefferson Davis by the 4th Michigan Cavalry. These events have been recounted many times but rarely so well as here. The skilled newsman's ability to write exciting, dramatic prose is demonstrated time and again, as is his penchant for attention-holding lead sentences, "human interest" details ("William H. Withington went to war, but on the way he stopped long enough to buy a corset for his wife . . ."); and a tendency to lapse into maudlin sentimentality (the last Michigan veteran did not die, "he heard the roll being called. As a good soldier, he answered to his name").

For his material Woodford relies almost entirely on printed sources. It is regrettable that he did not take the time to sample the vast Civil War manuscript resources of the Burton Historical Collection, the Michigan Historical Collections, the State Archives, and other depositories. The excellent use that he makes of William H. Withington's manuscript notebook shows what he could have done had he used the papers of other participants in the war.

The episodes that Woodford has chosen are, almost without exception, rattling good stories. The emphasis in them, however, too often seems to be not on Michigan but on Detroit men, Detroit military units, Detroit newspapers (the *Free Press* and the *Advertiser and Tribune* are the only contemporary Michigan papers cited). Woodford's lifelong association with that city makes this emphasis understandable, but the fact remains that only one of every sixteen people living in Michigan in 1860 resided in Detroit.

Partisans of military units which receive little or no attention from Woodford will no doubt be heard from, but this reviewer was most disappointed by the author's failure to give more than a passing glance at what happened in Michigan itself during the war. With the notable exception of an account of Detroit's shameful race riot of 1863 and some discussion of soldiers' aid activities, there is little to suggest the effect of the war on the home front. Had he chosen to do so, the author could have found plenty of drama and human interest in such stories as that of the Calhoun County family learning that within four days one son had been killed and a second taken prisoner in separate engagements in Virginia, or how the demands of a war economy stimulated the development of Alpena, or the Washtenaw County men who, in their anxiety to avoid the draft, sent an agent to hire substitutes among the contrabands in the South only to find there a New England agent who was paying more money. Episodes such as these are as much a part of the history and legend of Michigan during the war as are the exploits of soldiers upon which Woodford concentrates his attention. Professor Winfred A. Harbison, in his foreword, is aware of the emphasis placed on military events, but he says that Woodford "quite properly" does not concern himself with such matters as politics or economics. But why should he ignore such subjects? Surely it is not, as Dr. Harbison suggests, because "most people" did not think of the war in such terms. As he himself has shown in his studies of Civil War political campaigns, politics was very much a part of the war in the minds of the public, and there is ample evidence that the family breadwinners were acutely conscious of the effect the war was having on business conditions.

A number of errors or questionable statements were noted. For example, the 24th Michigan Infantry was not an "all-Detroit and Wayne County regiment" (p. 93). According to Orson Curtis' history of the regiment, which Woodford cites as his principal source, 120 men, or about 12 percent of the original complement of 1,030 (not 1,335), were not from Wayne County, a fact which Woodford is apparently unaware of. Dr. John L. Whiting, father of Lieutenant Henry R. Whiting, was not "a former Michigan congressman" (p. 94). One would like the source of Woodford's statement (p. 208) that 400,933 Union soldiers were treated for wounds during the war since William F. Fox's authoritative *Regimental Losses* states that 246,712 wounded soldiers were treated in Union hospitals and that this accounts for 90 per cent of all Union wounded. The assertion (p. 2) that fifty Michigan soldiers received the Medal of Honor overlooks the eight Michigan men in Company B of the 47th Ohio Infantry who were awarded the medal, and about a dozen other Michigan men who received the medal for service with non-Michigan units. The records of the Michigan Department of the Grand Army of the Republic were not "officially closed" (p. 246) when the last veteran died in 1948. At the time of her death

in 1960 Mrs. Leah Simpson Marshall, the state G. A. R. secretary, had not filed the final report that was required to close out this agency, and as a result the legislature in 1960 was still appropriating funds to carry on the work of this organization, twelve years after its last member had died.

In spite of these criticisms, this reviewer urges all Civil War fans to read *Father Abraham's Children*. They will enjoy it greatly and will look forward to the appearance of additional Civil War studies from Frank Woodford's busy typewriter.

Michigan Historical Commission

GEORGE S. MAY

*The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad.* By Larry Gara. (Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1961. ix, 202 p. Index. \$5.00.)

This author aims at a critical survey of the elements — facts and fancy, historical and legendary — of the underground railroad over which fugitive slaves escaped to freedom.

He believes that the "righteous behavior and high drama" attributed to this railroad is largely of legendary character, and that this fact is not generally recognized nor has been sufficiently investigated.

His criticism deals largely with what he calls "the almost universal acceptance" of the underground as a well organized transportation conspiracy; intrepid abolitionists sending multitudes of passengers over this railroad to the Promised Land of Freedom; these fugitives often hotly pursued by cruel slave hunters; their capture avoided by daring, ingenious white conductors, of which the Quaker is a stereotype; great secrecy with pass words used; an inherent yearning for freedom in every slave; and the hero being the abolitionist with the passive slave in a secondary role.

There is no explanation of how he arrives at "the almost universal acceptance" figure, but he has drawn from a wide and substantial bibliography in his own study and of the underground railroad, and cautions his readers against acceptance of legend as fact.

He readily admits that there was an underground railroad, and the last part of his book is one of the best proofs of its existence, especially if the reader is familiar with many of the sources from which his quotes are lifted out of context. He records evidences of all the things universally accepted but believes the written accounts exaggerated.

This critical survey emphasizes that in the early 1830's some slaves, later renowned, had escaped with very little assistance outside of their own ingenuity, that many fugitives were "on their own" at least during a part of their escape, and that free Negroes had a far more important

role in helping slaves to freedom than is recorded or included in the stories of the underground railroad.

Later, in the 1850's he finds more concerted action among Negro and white abolitionists, such as Harriet Tubman, Josiah Henson, Alexander Ross, Levi Coffin and many others, with anti-slavery societies and vigilance committees. For some reason he does not seem to see this as the underground railroad.

The reader may feel some inconsistency, and a tendency to criticize for criticism's sake, when the writer estimates the "escapes from slave hunters" as very few, even though the Wilbert H. Siebert papers, alone, whom the author disagrees with but frequently quotes, records over eighty authentic, important cases in one of his appendices, or when to prove a point the reader is lead to believe on one page that slaves could read Southern papers, while on another, that they could not read the Northern ones.

The author exemplifies, while acknowledging, the different role of separating legend from history as he backs into the subject with a negativism which is almost lost in positivism as he proceeds.

However, this can be called a valuable book in that it points directly to findings seldom stated or handled, among which are: "Underground railroad" is a hypothetical term used to describe an escape route for slaves. It did not run underground, and tunnels and unusual hiding places were fewer than seems to be believed. No one knows the exact origin of the term "underground railroad" as several places claim its beginning. Some Southern people helped slaves escape. In stereotyping the "cruel Southern slave-holder" thousands of people in the South who never owned slaves are overlooked. The Promised Land was not always North, but was sometimes South, East, in Africa, or somewhere else. Every slave did not know about the underground railroad and most of them adjusted to slavery as best they could. The role of the Negro, both free and slave, in the underground has been unsung. There were, in that time, all kinds of white folks and all kinds of dark folks, just as there are now, in both the North and the South. The idea of the underground railroad for purposes of propaganda and debate, especially in Congress, was more important than its reality. There is need for much more careful research on this romantic, complex phase of American life.

*East Lansing, Michigan*

BLANCHE COGGAN

*Don Divance Lescoghier: My Story for the First Seventy-seven Years.*  
By Don Divance Lescoghier. (Madison, 1960. 108 p. Illustrations.)

*Don Divance Lescoghier* is an affectionately written autobiography. The author says that he has related his story "for a single purpose — to



enable my wife, my children, and my friends to understand the forces and experiences which have molded me into the kind of man I am now — at seventy-seven years of age in this year 1960." It is a story well done; for from it emerges a clear portrait of the philosophy, hopes, and the rich experiences of one who has lived a very full life.

It is the story of a man who was a clergyman, educator, writer, servant of government, and industrial consultant. Unlike many books printed for private publication, this volume is very readable and interesting. Likewise, the problems with which he deals, and with frankness, are of basic concern to social scientists. Since Mr. Lescoghier spent so many of his years in the Middle West, his story should have an especial appeal to those interested in the history of the area.

Don Lescoghier was born in Detroit. His detailed descriptions of his boyhood during the bicycle era are rich in social history. His account of student days at Eastern High School is more than nostalgia.

The author's undergraduate work was taken at Albion. He describes the manner in which his outlook was altered by the new collegiate horizons. At Albion he was a member of the debating team and engaged in other extracurricular activities. These did not detract from his scholarship; for he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

Albion had prepared Mr. Lescoghier for the ministry. His assignments included several rural churches in central and northern Michigan. The stories of ministerial life in Petoskey whet the appetite for more.

Mr. Lescoghier left the ministry in order to take graduate work in economics at the University of Wisconsin. He was greatly influenced by the late John R. Commons. It is not surprising that he did extensive research and publication in labor history and economics. After the completion of his work at Wisconsin, he was employed by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industries. During a portion of this interval he taught at Hamlin College in Minneapolis. He participated actively in the struggle for workman's compensation and other pioneer welfare legislation.

He returned to the University of Wisconsin as a faculty member. Here he pioneered in the introduction of many courses in economics. He served, also, as a visiting professor at the University of California. Throughout the thirties Mr. Lescoghier served on various faculties; on frequent occasions he was an economic consultant. During the depression he was a member of a presidential committee to study the welfare program of New York City.

In semiretirement Mr. Lescoghier has found time for extensive overseas travel. His insight into conditions overseas will appeal, in particular, to an academic audience.

Mr. Lescoghier is proud of his family. The many personal accounts do not detract from the story. Readers can sense the companionship of family and friends.

In an autobiography the narrator cannot offer a definite appraisal. Any reader of *Don Divance Lescohier* can easily offer his own positive judgments — and without any reservation.

Wayne State University

SIDNEY GLAZER

*A Guide to the Care and Administration of Manuscripts.* By Lucile M. Kane. (Madison, Wisconsin, The American Association for State and Local History, Volume II, Number 11, September, 1960. 333-88 p. Illustrations and Bibliography. \$1.00 to members; \$1.25 to nonmembers.)

This item is the latest in the excellent series of "what to do" and "how to do" bulletins undertaken by the Association in the early 1940s. They serve as guides to those individuals and organizations interested in state and local history. As curator of manuscripts at the Minnesota History Society for the past several years, Miss Kane has devoted many hours to studying the various procedures and techniques used in collecting, processing, servicing, and using manuscripts and is very well qualified to relate this experience for the use of the amateur and the professional alike. While every person or organization will have to adapt or adjust the techniques discussed, it is a "must" item for all who are active in the field.

*James Strang's Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac.* Edited by George S. May. (Mackinac Island, W. Stewart Woodfill, 1959. xii, 100 p. Illustrations and appendix. \$7.50.)

While Brigham Young was settling his colony in the valley near Salt Lake, James Strang was leading his branch of Mormon Christianity to Beaver Island at the top of Lake Michigan. There, in 1850, at the age of thirty-seven, Strang founded a kingdom whose capital was named for himself: Saint James. But his subjects were soon at war with the "gentiles" of Whiskey Point: fishermen who had lived on a tip of Beaver Island. These men appealed for aid to friends and relatives on Mackinac Island.

On Mackinac the Mormons were considered fanatics who prohibited liquor, lived in polygamy, made their women wear short skirts, "consecrated" to their kingdom any unguarded fishing nets, won elections by devious means, and seemed bent on driving all "gentiles" out of northern Michigan.

From Mackinac came the leadership and often the participants to harass the Mormon kingdom. Beaver Island wives were insulted and

men were beaten, boats were destroyed and nets stolen, meetings disrupted and elections rigged. Mormons were arrested on doubtful charges and carried off to Mackinac for trial; King Strang was all but deprived of his rightful seat in the state legislature at Lansing. And, to add insult, it was the Mackinac version of every dispute that seemed to receive friendly explanation in Michigan newspapers.

To tell the Mormon version, Strang wrote *Ancient and Modern Michilimackinac*, offering as much history of Mackinac's mistreatment of Beaver as of Mackinac itself. Published in his weekly *Northern Islander*, and as a separate book in 1854, it has been reprinted twice. Because reprints command a hundred dollars and originals vastly more, the current edition is a major public service.

Mackinac, through the eyes of James Strang, had a long but unsavory history. "A barren pile of limestone," it lacked not only the excellent harbor of Beaver Island's Paradise Bay, but Lake Michigan's better fisheries, Cheboygan's land connections, and Lake Superior's finer resort climate. The island was dying and its decay would be completed when a railroad bridge should some day connect the two peninsulas.

Mackinac deserved to die, Strang suggested, because of its long record of crime, the persecution of Mormons being the newest. Its people had robbed, debauched, and enslaved the Indian, driving his women into prostitution. "Ten times more liquor is drank in Mackinac, than any other town of the same population," Strang wrote. The people "had stood at the public treasury, like pigs at a trough," living from United States expenditures at the fort; yet when war came in 1812 they had immediately switched to the English side. Such were the people who persecuted Mormons in the name of morality, religion, and patriotism; such was the island where Strang, for contempt of court, was sentenced to prison for life.

Strang's account of the war between Mormon and gentile, whether at Whiskey Point, or Pine River, or Hog Island, is a deeply biased one. Conflicting evidence is readily available in Milo Quaife's *Kingdom of St. James*. But Strang was a capable lawyer, a competent member of the Michigan legislature, a skilled debater, a provocative writer. His *Michilimackinac* makes exciting reading and, as editor George May quotes Milo Quaife, it is "saner and more reliable" than any anti-Strang narrative.

Dr. May deserves credit not only for the task as a whole, but for the excellence of the parts. His introduction offers a setting at once deft and precise. In the footnotes May describes the people whom the serious reader will wish identified but he explains neither the names that are irrelevant or insignificant nor those known to every reader. Similarly, Dr. May footnotes Strang's more flagrant errors of fact, but he does not attempt to shade every twisted judgment. The editor wisely encour-

ages a sympathetic reading, confident that anyone who seeks truth will not rest until he has seen accounts by Strang's enemies on Mackinac.

Finally, one can only marvel at the publisher, W. Stewart Woodfill, who loves the Mackinac country and its history. In this volume he re-opens the pages of the most venomous attack ever inflicted upon his island and its people. He might have rejoiced in the scarcity of Strangs' *Michilimackinac*; instead he has republished it in a beautiful text, for all to read. This is scholarship at its best.

Michigan State University

MADISON KUHN

*The Explorations of Pierre Esprit Radisson.* Edited by Arthur T. Adams. (Minneapolis, Ross & Haines, Inc., 1961. lxxxiv, 258 p. Bibliography and index. \$8.75.)

In this book, Mr. Adams has brought together and edited the various voyages of Pierre Esprit Radisson, the famous French explorer of the seventeenth century. With his brother-in-law, Des Groseilliers, Radisson wandered through the wilderness of the upper Great Lakes, unearthed the mid-continent's treasure in furs, and learned that the best access to it lay through Hudson Bay. In their pursuit of capital to exploit the northern trade, the two Frenchmen drifted from New France to New England and thence to Old England, where their tales unloosened purse strings and led to the formation in 1670 of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Perhaps two more extraordinary men have never portaged a canoe in North America. Radisson and Des Groseilliers possessed all the traits of the successful explorer: courage, cunning, heroic strength, and an uncommon ability to withstand all the blows that an unkindly wilderness so often renders. They could soothe savages and charm courtiers; and whether in the wilds of Wisconsin or in the presence of the kind at Oxford, they knew how to color a story to suit their audience. It is this embroidery that has given historians so much trouble; and in attempting to separate wheat from chaff in Radisson's voyages, Mr. Adams faced a most difficult task.

Mr. Adams presents all six of Radisson's known or alleged voyages. The first or "Captivity Voyage"—to use the editor's titles and his dates—relates how Radisson, a lad in his teens, was captured by the Mohawks and lived among them as an adopted son for nearly two years. The second or "Onondaga Voyage" is concerned with Radisson's minor role (1657-58) in the French mission established among the Onondagas during a lull in the French-Iroquois wars. The third or "Mississippi Voyage" tells of a trip purportedly made by Radisson and Des Groseilliers, 1658-60, into the upper Great Lakes, where (according to Radisson and

the editor) the two men meandered through northern Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, reaching as far west as the Mississippi River. In the fourth or "Superior Voyage," 1661-63, the explorers retraced much of the same ground; and then, before returning to Montreal, they made a side trip to the shores of Hudson Bay. The fifth and sixth voyages cover Radisson's picaresque adventures in the Bay, to which he returned — after employment in the Hudson's Bay Company and the French navy — first (1682-83) in the service of France and then (1684) of England.

In the preparation of his text for the first four voyages, Mr. Adams used the manuscript in the Bodleian Library. He and his "modernizer," Loren Kallsen, made only those changes necessary "to render (p. xxix) Radisson's chaotic narrative palatable to the reader . . ." For the last two voyages, the text edited by Gideon D. Scull, *Voyages of Peter Esprit Radisson*, Boston, 1885, was employed; and very few changes were made.

Of what historical value are Radisson's voyages? The answer is not easily given. For like Father Hennepin, Radisson was a teller of tall tales. Yet certainly the first two voyages are rewardingly rich in their description of the Iroquois, and Radisson's picture of those un-noble savages jibes with that of most contemporary observers. Quite probably, too, the last two voyages also bear the hallmark of truth. However, the middle voyages remain open to considerable scepticism despite Mr. Adams' efforts to present them as authentic experiences, valid in almost every respect.

It is the editor's contention that the third voyage is a composite journal of two expeditions, 1654-56 and 1658-60, and that the fourth voyage occurred, 1661-63. This theory, for all its elaboration and apparent logic, conflicts with the general thesis put forth by Grace L. Nute, in *Caesars of the Wilderness* (New York, 1943); and the reviewer finds himself in agreement with Miss Nute, whose arguments rest upon logic as well as original research. It therefore still seems evident that Radisson was not with Des Groseilliers, 1654-56, and that the so-called "Mississippi Voyage" is a figment of Radisson's imagination and/or his recollections of Des Groseilliers' oral reports of his 1654-56 expedition. It also seems clear that the "Superior Voyage" took place within an eleven-month period, 1659-60, and that neither Radisson nor Des Groseilliers could possibly have traveled to Hudson Bay within such a short time, for it required two summers' paddling just to reach the Lake Superior country and return to Montreal. In short, the historical evidence uncovered by Miss Nute makes Adams' "new theory" untenable.

Michigan State University

ALVIN C. GLUEK, JR.

## Contributors

Merlin Stonehouse is a native of Sault Ste Marie. He was program director at WKZO in Kalamazoo before going to Washington, D.C., as White House correspondent. Later he had his own news agency there. In June, 1961, he received the Ph.D. degree from the University of California at Los Angeles. He is an assistant professor at Occidental College in Los Angeles.

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Louis L. Tucker received the Ph.D. degree in history in 1957 at the University of Washington. For two years he was a Fellow of the Institute of American History and Culture in Williamsburg, Virginia. In 1960 he became the director of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio.

Haviland F. Reves is a native of Detroit, a graduate of its Central High School and Wayne State University. His family now counts nine generations to reside in Detroit. He has written for specialized national business and industrial magazines and is a past president of the Associated Business Writers of America.

Ethel Hough Mann is a long-time resident of the St. Ignace area. She furnished the compilation and organized much of the material pertaining to wild flowers, plants, and wild life contained in *Before the Bridge* which was published in 1957 by the Kiwanis Club of St. Ignace. A collection of her poetry "Living Lyrics" was published in 1959.

In the National League of American Pen Women, Mrs. Tyler served as branch president of the District of Columbia Branch, state president of the District of Columbia, and national chaplain. She also was worthy matron of the Hillsdale Order of the Eastern Star, chaplain of the Susan Riviere Hetzel Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and of the Daughters of Founders and Patriots, and of chapter B. of the P. E. O. Sisterhood.

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The Historical Society of Michigan is an organization maintained and managed by Michigan citizens who are interested in the history of their state. It includes teachers, business men, professional people, and others who write history, study history, or just enjoy reading history. Its purpose is to encourage historical research and publication and to foster local historical societies throughout the state. Membership dues to individuals, libraries, and institutions are \$5.00 per year. *Michigan History* is sent to each member.

The Michigan Historical Commission is an official state body, consisting of six members appointed by the Governor. It was first established by an act of the legislature in 1913. The Commission is custodian of the state's archives; it compiles, edits, and publishes Michigan materials; and seeks to cultivate, through the Historical Society of Michigan and other groups, a continuing interest in the history of Michigan from the early times to the present.

*Michigan History* is a quarterly journal containing articles by qualified writers on Michigan subjects, reviews of books related to Michigan and its past, and news of historical activities in the state. Contributions are invited. Manuscripts should be submitted to the Editor, Michigan Historical Commission, Lansing 13, Michigan.

The Commission maintains at Lansing the Michigan Historical Museum, a rich storehouse of artifacts and documents related to the history of the state.

Among the activities of the Commission and the Society are the following: an annual meeting is held each year in the fall, at which tours and talks on Michiganiana are enjoyed; books and pamphlets are published from time to time; a conference on the teaching of Michigan materials is held annually; historical celebrations are encouraged in various parts of the state; a program of marking historical places is sponsored; guidance is provided to local governmental and state agencies on the destruction of useless records and the preservation of records having historical value.

